



High Performance Learning

Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement

Nebraska

Preliminary Plan - June, 2002

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Nebraska's Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement will integrate and coordinate state, local and federal efforts and activities to assist all schools to be high-performing. This preliminary plan is the start of an ongoing process of continually striving to improve. As a preliminary plan, it includes many areas/topics that are not yet well defined but will be addressed in the future. This plan also contains a consolidated application for federal programs under P. L. 107-110 – No Child Left Behind. The responses for that application were moved to Section 2 to assist reviewers but will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan over time. This has resulted in duplication of information in some places.

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Section 1. School Improvement in Nebraska

Introduction

Nebraska is a unique state and tends to do things in unique ways. From its fierce sense of ownership at the lowest level to its Unicameral Legislature, from its bedrock local values of family and community to its statewide pride in who we are, Nebraska is unique. With 587 school districts ranging in size from one student to 45,000 students; with 300 plus elementary only school districts; with 400 plus districts of 100 students or less; and, with 60% of the students enrolled in the largest 20 school districts, Nebraska is unique.

Nebraska, as a state, has never had state-level curriculum reviews and/or adoptions and state assessments in all subject areas. Inter-relationships among the people of the state and their governments have always been largely up-close, personal and face-to-face. Nebraska is unique. Nebraskans place the highest values on our families and our communities and these are local not state. “Family and community first” ensures we protect those values we treasure. It ensures that the institutions we create and the government services we provide protect, support and strengthen families and communities. Specifically, schools in Nebraska are seen as extensions of our families that are designed to care for and educate our children. Schools are seen as essential to the community’s roles in supporting families and providing education for the next generation of adults and leaders.

School Improvement

School Improvement in Nebraska is an ongoing positive effort to become even better. Every district and school is in continuous school improvement. In this comprehensive state plan, schools that would be identified as being in “school improvement” under Section 1116 of No Child Left Behind, are called IMPACT (IMProvement ACTion) Schools.

All public school districts in Nebraska participate in systematic school improvement, as established in accreditation requirements (Rule 10). Schools accredited by the North Central Association, a regional accrediting agency, also must fulfill a requirement for school improvement. These procedures are intended to improve student learning. Nebraska schools conduct systematic school improvement by using a continuous process based upon the “Nebraska Framework for School Improvement”, North Central Association School improvement guides, or other guides. The school improvement plans required of all public schools include a mission/vision statement, school profile, improvement goals, an action plan including strategies, timelines, etc. and assessment of progress. The School Improvement Rubric for The Nebraska Framework for School Improvement, developed by Educational Service Unit (ESU) Professional Developers, public school representatives and the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Accreditation/School Improvement staff, identifies four levels of implementation for each of the framework’s components. A school improvement plan typically encompasses a period of five years and includes periodic visits by external teams who review and recommend strategies for continued achievement of local goals.

Each year the Department School Improvement Staff work with ESU Staff to provide statewide professional development opportunities. A series of seminars is provided and designed for educators having responsibility in their local school improvement process. In

recent years, seminar focus has been on using information and student performance results from the state's assessment system in the school improvement process and plan. Attendees learn how to analyze and use student performance information and other assessment data when working toward their school improvement goals. In addition each seminar participant receives support materials such as school improvement guides and supplemental handbooks developed cooperatively by NDE Staff, ESU Staff, and Nebraska school's staff.

Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement

In January of 2002, Commissioner Douglas Christensen initiated the development of a comprehensive plan to integrate and coordinate the state, local, and federal activities and efforts to help all schools be high-performing. This Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement includes all sections and teams within the Department. It also includes Nebraska's consolidated application for federal programs under P. L. 107-100.

The Comprehensive State Plan for School Improvement is being developed and implemented by a Management Team comprised of Team Leaders representing Early Childhood (including the state's Head Start-State Collaboration Office), Special Education, Higher Education and Adult Education, Professional Development, Technology, Data Center, Curriculum and Instruction, Career and Technical Education and all federal programs.

A Leadership Council position has been created to lead in the development and implementation of this plan. The person in this new position, Federal Programs Director, is responsible for coordinating improvement activities within the Department and overseeing the integration of federal programs' role in supporting these activities.

A State Plan Advisory Committee, representing a broad base of organizations and institutions including teachers and administrators, higher education, ESUs, community organizations and adult literacy providers, the ESEA Committee of Practitioners, Governor's office, state organizations (school boards, teachers and administrators) has been created to assist in development and oversight of the Comprehensive State Plan. The Advisory Committee has assisted with the development of this plan and will meet regularly to provide input into the direction of the activities and strategies to implement this plan. The broad base of representation on the Advisory Committee will assist in coordinating and integrating State, local, and Federal activities for school improvement.

This plan is in its initial stages of development. It is anticipated the entire 2002-03 school year will be spent finalizing the written plan and implementing the activities identified to date as well as other initiatives developing throughout the year. Some activities planned already include:

- Creating a new role for Department staff to collaboratively work to provide assistance and support to districts as they develop their plans.
- Integrating activities and sharing information through the State Plan Advisory Committee.
- Expanding the Departments efforts through partnerships and interagency efforts.
- Coordinating the Statewide School Support teams through the ESUs.

- Integrating federal and state resources on statewide initiatives such as:
 - Highly qualified staff in the area of reading;
 - Coordinating with institutions of higher education to provide endorsements and advanced degrees for professional development;
 - Leadership academies for administrators and recruitment of administrators;
 - Working with post-secondary institutions for training and courses for paraprofessionals leading to associate degrees;
- Coordinating federal programs into a cross-team group that will develop:
 - Consolidated federal program applications – 2003-04 school year.
 - Integrated monitoring for federal programs (expanding current process from 6 programs to all programs) - 2003-04 school year.
 - Consolidated advisory groups into one Committee of Practitioners (March 2002) with separate advisory subgroups for the Reading First, 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Migrant Education programs.
 - Consolidated federal financial and progress reporting – by 2003-04.

Since Nebraska's Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement includes a consolidated federal application under P.L. 107-110, districts will also develop comprehensive plans for school improvement. Like the State Plan, in the initial year, districts' plans will be preliminary and will include the consolidated application for all formula federal programs. To truly be comprehensive, district plans will incorporate existing learning goals and school improvement activities and efforts with a focus on the new goals for the State.

With the input of the State Advisory Committee, the Committee of Practitioners and all the staff of the Department, goals for the State were developed around the expectations for high-performing schools.

A high-performing school is accountable for meeting all of the state goals:

- 1) All students will perform to a high level of achievement.
- 2) All students will be taught by quality staff.
- 3) All students will learn in a safe, supportive learning environment.
- 4) All schools and NDE will be learning organizations.

Throughout the goals are themes that support student learning and high achievement with an emphasis on coordination and integration, accountability, and equity:

- 1) Professional development,
- 2) Using technology to improve achievement, and
- 3) Parent/family literacy and involvement.

To adequately develop a plan, it is important to understand the “history” of what has been implemented as well as to identify the existing efforts and activities to enable their coordination and integration. The following identifies our goals as well as our history and profiles some of the existing efforts and activities undertaken for school improvement in Nebraska.

Goal 1. All students will perform to a high level of achievement.

Goal 1 – All students will perform to a high level of achievement is an overarching goal for all students in all subject areas at all grade levels. It incorporates the goals and performance indicators for the State under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (I. D.E.A.), and the core indicators of Career and Technical Education (Perkins). During the 2002-03 school year, the State will work to integrate more fully the goals and indicators of the various programs under the State goals and establish performance targets for each indicator.

NCLB Goal

By 2013-2014, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics.

Indicators:

The percentage of students, in the aggregate and for each subgroup, who are at or above the proficient level in reading/language arts on the State’s assessment system.

The percentage of students, in the aggregate and in each subgroup, who are at or above the proficient level in mathematics on the State’s assessment system.

The percentage of Title I schools that make adequate early progress in reading and mathematics.

I.D.E.A. Goal

All students with disabilities will participate in the assessment of state and local standards. Students with disabilities will meet the same standards as students without disabilities.

Indicators:

Number of children participating in the assessment

Results of students meeting standards (aggregated and disaggregated students with disabilities)

Perkins Core Indicator

Student attainment of academic and technical skill proficiencies.

Ensure that members of special populations will be provided with equal access to activities.

Individuals who are members of special populations will not be discriminated against on the basis of their status as members of special populations.

Programs are designed to enable the special populations to meet or exceed State adjusted levels of performance, and will prepare special populations with further training for high skill, high wage careers.

I.D.E.A. Goal

The rate of incidence for students with disabilities will be proportional across race and ethnicity categories (draft – subject to revision).

Indicator

The data that the percentage of students with disabilities is spread proportionately across race and ethnicity categories. (draft)

NCLB Goal

All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.

Indicators

The percentage of children identified as limited English proficient students, determined by cohort, who have attained English proficiency by the end of the school year.

The percentage of limited English proficient students who are at or above the proficient level in reading/language arts on the State's assessments, as reported for performance indicator 1.1.

The percentage of limited English proficient students who are at or above the proficient level in mathematics on the State's assessments, as reported for performance indicator 1.1.

NCLB Goal

All students will graduate from high school.

Indicators

The percentage of students who graduate from high school each year with a diploma,

- disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged
- calculated in the same manner as used in National Center for Education Statistics reports on Common Core of Data.

The percentage of students who drop out of school,

- disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged

- calculated in the same manner as used in National Center for Education Statistics reports on Common Core of Data.

I.D.E.A. Goal

The dropout rate for students with disabilities will be the same or less than the dropout rate for students without disabilities.

Indicator

The data shows that the drop-out rate for students with disabilities is decreasing annually to approximate the drop-out rate for students without disabilities.

The graduation rate for students with disabilities will be the same or greater than the graduation rate for students without disabilities.

Perkins Core Indicators

Student attainment of a high school diploma, equivalent or postsecondary degree or credential.

Placement in, retention in, and completion of postsecondary education or advanced training, military service or employment.

Participation/completion of programs leading to nontraditional training and employment.

The goal “All students will perform to a high level of achievement” includes all students in all subject areas at all grade levels. The goal of Nebraska’s School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System is to improve student learning by enhancing the capacity of every teacher to conduct appropriate assessment for student learning and implement instructional approaches and strategies to ensure that all students perform to high levels of achievement in all subject areas and at all grade levels. To accomplish these goals, all teachers and administrators must become assessment literate. In an ideal implementation of STARS, the reporting of progress at specific grade levels (i.e., 4, 8, and 11) is merely an external confirmation of appropriate instruction and assessment throughout the school system.

Since the initiation of the STARS Assessment system, many Nebraska school districts have:

- Articulated the standards in reading/language arts and mathematics across all grade levels (K-12) by defining the expectations of what all students must know and be able to do at each grade level in order to demonstrate mastery on the established content standards in these subject areas in grades 4, 8, and 11.
- Developed a district assessment system that includes procedures and processes for assessing these expectations at all grade levels. These districts used the Quality Assessment Criteria Indicators for developing all of their assessments.
- Established academic achievement standards for determining performance levels on the assessments at all grade levels.

- Aligned curriculum and instruction across grade levels and subject areas to ensure the expectations are being taught.
- Developed report cards to report progress to parents based on the expectations for each grade level.

Nebraska is supporting State Goal 1 through:

- Nebraska L.E.A.R.N.S. (Leading Educational Achievement through Rigorous Nebraska Standards) Content standards;
- STARS (School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System) Assessment System that includes:
 - STARS assessments in reading/writing/speaking/listening; mathematics; science; social studies/history;
 - Statewide writing assessment;
 - Norm-referenced assessments;
- Professional Development for STARS;
- Accountability; and
- Equity – Including all students.

Nebraska L.E.A.R.N.S.

The State Board of Education has adopted measurable model academic content standards that cover reading/writing/speaking/listening, writing, mathematics, science, social studies and history. These content standards are known as Nebraska L.E.A.R.N.S. (Leading Educational Achievement through Rigorous Nebraska Standards)

Nebraska's LB 812 (Rev. Stat. Neb. 79-760) requires all school districts to adopt measurable quality academic content standards for reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, and history by July 1, 2003. The quality academic content standards adopted by Nebraska school districts may be those adopted by the State Board of Education (Nebraska L.E.A.R.N.S) or may be local school district standards that are determined to be equal to or more rigorous than the state standards. Local content standards must be approved by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Nebraska school districts have aligned their local curriculum with the state approved content standards in order to provide learning opportunities for all students. The local curriculum and standards alignment process is documented by each school district in a portfolio of standards and assessment procedures that are reviewed for each content area. Not only are school districts required to describe and outline their process for aligning the standards with the local curriculum, they are required to document that students have had the opportunity to learn that content.

The purpose of aligning Nebraska's rigorous content standards with local curriculum is to establish standards-based classrooms within all Nebraska school districts. When aligned with local curriculum, the content standards are used to establish clear learning targets and

expectations for all students within all classrooms. Standards-based classrooms are achieved as each teacher clearly articulates the learning targets, aligns instruction to the learning targets within each of the content standards, and accurately assesses whether or not students are meeting the targets outlined by the content standards.

In support of the Nebraska L.E.A.R.N.S., the Curriculum and Instruction team, including Career and Technical Education, developed an alignment tool called *Links-to-L.E.A.R.N.S.* (Leading Educational Achievement through Rigorous Nebraska Standards) which is a crosswalk of the State academic standards in the core areas with the “essential learnings” of all other discipline areas. *Links to L.E.A.R.N.S.* was mailed to all school buildings in February of 2000. Secondary Career and Technical Education instructors are using this “tool” to demonstrate that academic standards can be taught and competently assessed through both norm-referenced and classroom-based or criterion-referenced assessments outside the four core areas of math, science, reading/writing/listening, and social studies/history. NDE consultants continue the development and inservice use of the *Links to L.E.A.R.N.S.* document with local school districts.

Career and Technical Education through the reauthorization of the Carl Perkins Education Act has had a renewed emphasis on academic achievement, assessment, and accountability. CTE is also promoting a balanced curriculum model. The Nebraska State Board of Education on March 7, 2000 adopted a policy statement, that supports that a balanced curriculum is necessary for all students to reach their highest level of achievement. Integration of discipline areas continues to be a high priority.

On the federal level when Carl Perkins was reauthorized two years ago, new emphasis was placed on four “Core Indicators”.

- Student attainment of challenging State-established academic standards and career/technical education skill proficiencies.
- Student attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, a proficiency credential in conjunction with a secondary school diploma, or postsecondary degree or credential.
- Placement in, retention, and completion of, postsecondary education or advanced training, placement in military service, or placement or retention in employment.
- Student participation in, and completion of, career and technical education programs that lead to nontraditional training and employment.

Extensive professional development activities supported the adoption and implementation of L.E.A.R.N.S. In the fall of 1998, many Nebraska educators, in cooperation with ESU staff, began reviewing the standards in order to compare them with local curricula.

Also in the fall of 1998, a statewide task force began work on correlating curriculum and assessments of students with severe disabilities to the Nebraska state standards. The work of this task force resulted in a model from which local districts can develop “expanded standards”. Modification and alternate assessment models are in place for students with disabilities that are in alignment with benchmarks established within the Office of Special Education Programs. The alternate assessment model was developed to reflect skills needed

by students with severe disabilities. Staff development activities provided through state, ESU, and local resources assisted local educators in implementing standards and developing assessment processes.

STARS Assessment System

The Nebraska state assessment system is called STARS – School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System. The assessment system includes a statewide trait-based writing assessment, norm-referenced assessments conducted annually within the grade spans of 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12, and the assessment of content standards in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies/history.

The State Board of Education has made a commitment that Nebraska schools must be “the best in the nation.” The two key priorities are to “improve educational opportunities” and “improve learning” from pre-school education through the programs of community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and beyond. Nebraska schools must provide quality educational programs along with equal opportunity for all individuals to participate in those programs in order to be “the best in the nation.”

The underlying philosophy that supports Nebraska’s School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System emphasizes a partnership between the local school districts, the Educational Service Units and the Nebraska Department of Education. Keeping decisions about student performance on standards at the local classroom level provides a balance between state level guidance and local decision-making. Partnership and balance are the two crucial elements in making changes in schools that will result in improved learning for all students.

During the 2000 session, the Nebraska Legislature passed Legislative Bill 812 that amended State Statute 79-760 (The Educational Quality Accountability Act). This legislation established the requirements and general procedures for the implementation of standards, assessment, and accountability reporting for public school districts in Nebraska. The bill maintains and supports Nebraska’s School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS).

Nebraska school districts are required to assess rigorous content standards locally according to an outlined schedule. School districts may use a combination of assessments to measure the standards. The assessments used include norm-referenced tests, criterion referenced assessments, or locally developed classroom assessments. Regardless of the assessments selected, school districts must document that their assessments meet the Six Quality Assessment Criteria that have been established for the state of Nebraska. The assessment review process includes multiple steps.

By September 30th of each year, all school districts are required to submit assessment plans that outline the assessment procedures to be used in their districts that will be to measure the content standards assessed. The assessment plans are reviewed by the Nebraska Department of Education, and feedback about their plans for assessment is provided to local school districts. During the course of the school year, each school district assesses its students and implements the assessment procedures that were outlined in the assessment plan.

By June 30th of each year, school districts are required to report the results of their students on the content standards. A secured electronic website is provided for reporting. Districts

report their student results in four levels of achievement: advanced, proficient, progressing, and beginning. Districts are required to complete reports that include all students including students with disabilities and students learning the English language. Any students not included in each of the reporting forms must be reported as "Not Assessed/Not Included in Reporting."

After the student achievement has been reported and calculated at the state level, statewide cut scores are established for student performance. These mastery level determinations are facilitated by the Buros Center for Testing using the expertise of panels of Nebraska educators from throughout the state. The mastery levels are determined in order to correspond to the five rating classifications that school districts will receive for each of the grade levels reported. The five rating classifications are as follows: Exemplary, Very Good, Good, Acceptable, but needs improvement, and Unacceptable. School districts receive a student performance rating for each of the grade levels assessed and reported.

The assessment used in each Nebraska school district to measure student achievement on standards must be of high quality. By June 30th of the each year, all Nebraska school districts are required to submit a District Assessment Portfolio of the assessment practices and procedures used for measuring students on standards. Included in the portfolio is a sample of the actual assessment instruments used.

The portfolios are reviewed and evaluated in order to determine whether or not they meet the Six Quality Assessment Criteria that have been established by the Nebraska Department of Education with the assistance of the Buros Center for Testing. The Six Quality Assessment Criteria are listed and described below. The assessments used in each Nebraska school district must:

1. Match and measure the standards. Districts must determine that the assessment used measures the standards and that students have sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their ability to meet the standard.
2. Provide opportunity for students to have learned the content. Districts must have examined their own local curriculum to determine that the opportunity to meet the standards exists within the local district's curriculum and that instruction on the standards occurs at an appropriate time in relationship to assessment.
3. Be free of bias. Districts must examine the assessment to be sure that any of the items or tasks are free of bias and are not insensitive to any group or circumstance.
4. Be written at the appropriate level. Districts must examine the assessment items or tasks in order to determine that the expectations are appropriate for the assessed grade level.
5. Be reliable and consistently scored. Districts must document that they can have confidence in the results of the assessment, that assessment results have produced an appropriate level of reliability, .70 or higher.
6. Have appropriate mastery levels. Districts must describe the systematic way they have determined achievement performance levels for the assessment, including both professional judgment and actual student results.

All Nebraska school districts submit District Assessment Portfolios of assessment practices and procedures for each grade level being assessed. Included in the portfolios is a random sample of assessment instruments that has been assigned to the school districts.

The Nebraska Department of Education works with the Buros Center for Testing in order to review the District Assessment Portfolios and to evaluate how well each district's assessment system meets the Six Quality Assessment Criteria. The evaluation process has two levels. The first level consists of a National Advisory Panel of well-known assessment experts who give guidance to the entire portfolio review process. This group of eight individuals, four from out of the state of Nebraska and four from within Nebraska assist in the training of the portfolio reviewers, provide guidance to the assessment review process, and make the final determination of model assessment practices within the state.

The second level of evaluation is the review of the portfolios themselves. Portfolio reviewers from both within the state of Nebraska and from outside of the state are contracted to complete the portfolio examinations. These portfolio reviewers are assessment experts who examine the district portfolios and determine the quality of the assessment processes and procedures used within each school district. The criteria for the review are the Six Quality Assessment Criteria. After a training session conducted by the Buros Center for Testing, the reviewers evaluate the portfolios each year from July 1-September 1st. School districts receive feedback on their assessment procedures as a result of the portfolio review in addition to suggestions about how their local assessment processes can be improved. This feedback along with a rating of the quality of the assessment is sent to the school districts in October of the year following the portfolio submission. Districts receive a rating for each portfolio submitted: Exemplary, Very Good, Good, Acceptable but needs improvement, or Unacceptable.

As the portfolio reviewers are examining the District Assessment Portfolios that include the assessment processes and procedures for Nebraska schools, they have also been instructed to identify potential model assessment practices. These practices that are "illustrative of model practice" are identified within all sizes and circumstances of school districts: large, medium, small, urban, and rural. The model practices identified are appropriate for replication in other school districts within the state of Nebraska.

In the fall, prior to the release of the portfolio feedback information, the National Advisory Panel convenes to review the model assessment practices that have been identified by the portfolio reviewers. The panel determines the most promising of those practices and makes the final selection, selecting four model practices for each of the Six Quality Assessment Criteria. The Nebraska Department of Education notifies the Nebraska school districts of this model assessment recognition and disseminates the model assessment information to Nebraska school districts.

Nebraska students in grades 4, 8, and 11 participate in a trait-based statewide writing assessment as outlined in the schedule that follows:

2000-2001	Statewide Writing Assessment Pilot Implementation – Gr. 4, 8, 11
2001-2002	Narrative writing – Grade 4
2002-2003	Descriptive writing - Grade 8

2003-2004

Persuasive writing – Grade 11

Students demonstrate their writing skills in response to a prompt that has been designed and selected for their appropriate grade levels. The Nebraska Department of Education convenes panels of teachers annually who develop, refine, and pilot the prompts with students prior to their statewide implementation. Students in the three grade levels respond to prompts in different modes of writing as outlined above.

The statewide writing assessments are scored by Nebraska teachers who are trained in trait based writing at three different locations within the state. At each of the geographically representative scoring sites, a random sample of writing assessments is also scored, and the results examined and analyzed by the Buros Center for Testing. The same sample is also scored out of the state by an independent and externally contracted test maker. All of the results are compiled and used by the Buros Center for Testing as they facilitate a standard-setting process in order to establish a proficiency level that can be used to determine whether or not a student has mastered the writing standards. Once that mastery level has been statistically determined, Nebraska school districts receive both electronic and written reports about the achievement of their students on the writing standards.

In addition to measuring their students on academic content standards in reading, writing, and mathematics, Nebraska school districts have assessed students with several national tests. These external tests have served to validate the results of students on state standards. A norm-referenced test is administered at least once in the elementary grades, once in the middle grades, and once in the high school. Additionally, districts have participated in other national assessments including the National Assessment of Educational Progress, (NAEP) and the American College Test (ACT). In all of these assessments, Nebraska students continue to score well, adding evidence to further support the success of Nebraska students on content standards.

Professional Development in Support of STARS

The Nebraska Department of Education and ESUs combined efforts to support intensive statewide trainings with Dr. Rick Stiggins of the Assessment Training Institute, Portland, Oregon. Dr. Stiggins trained a cadre of ESU staff developers and district curriculum specialists to support the development of assessment literacy in school buildings. These staff developers then work with their member schools to increase knowledge and skills of local educators. In addition, Dr. Stiggins presented multiple times to Nebraska educators beginning in February 2000 through December of 2002. He continues to focus on creating assessment literacy among all stakeholders. His framework for establishing Learning Teams was effectively adopted by many districts. The Learning Team approach to assessment literacy was highly successful according to the conducted evaluations. Dr. Stiggins' has also worked with teachers and administrators from Nebraska's 17 institutions of higher education.

In addition to the above efforts, multiple staff development opportunities in assessment were provided at the ESU level. The impact of this concentrated effort is indicated in the following data collected regarding attendance at reading/writing assessment workshops in 2000-01 and mathematics, science and social studies workshops in 2001-02.

STARS ASSESSMENT WORKSHOPS		
Participants	2000-01	2001-02
Elementary Teachers	3,682	3,169
Middle School and Secondary Teachers	2,228	2,233
Special Education Teachers	460	327
Curriculum Specialists	503	310
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	6,873	5,672

The NDE Assessment Coordinator provides a variety of workshops statewide. This Spring, a series of 21 Quality Assessment Criteria Workshops has been offered across the state. The major focus of these workshops was to provide assistance in preparing a District Assessment Portfolio for the Six Quality Assessment Criteria for the 2001/2002 Mathematics Assessment. Workshop contents included information gained from the 2001 portfolio review as well as general updates on the state assessment process. The goal of these workshops is to not only provide information to school personnel but also to further develop the capacity of ESU staff to assist schools with quality assessment practices.

A unique program, the Assessment Cohort, was initiated by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the summer of 2000. The purpose of the Assessment Cohort is to train Nebraska educators to be assessment leaders across the State. Nearly sixty participants have been involved in the training cohort thus far. These educators, representing the State geographically, have participated in 18 hours of graduate level course including "hands-on" training in the following: large scale and classroom-based assessment, data interpretation, data analysis and interventions.

The Assessment Cohort classes are team taught by UN-L professors and assessment practitioners within the State. These Cohort participants are being used in Nebraska to extent the professional development opportunities for educators across the State. Efforts are underway to create a specialization for assessment in Nebraska's teaching certification process.

Accountability

In the fall of each year the Nebraska Department of Education issues The State of the Schools Report. This report includes student performance data, teacher data, and information about the schools at the state, district, and building levels. Intended to be a comprehensive source of data for the entire state and beyond, this web site can be used both for the improvement of instruction and for public accountability. Student performance on standards is readily available. Student results on national tests are provided.

In addition to the information about student performance and assessment quality, detailed information is provided on teacher qualifications, course offerings, school expenditures and receipts. Downloadable files are made available through the site, and a follow up site is available to electronically respond to questions. The State of the Schools Report can be accessed either through the NDE Homepage, www.nde.state.ne.us or the following website: reportcard.nde.state.ne.us.

Included in the State of the Schools Report are the ratings that school districts receive on the results of both student performance and assessment quality. The rating on student performance is determined by a standard setting process based upon the achievement of

students on the content standards. This performance rating process is facilitated by the Buros Center for Testing in the fall of each year. The ratings on the assessment quality are a direct result of the review and evaluation of the District Assessment Portfolios. The ratings on both student performance and portfolio review are determined to be classified in any of the following categories: Exemplary, Very Good, Good, Acceptable but needs improvement, or Unacceptable.

In addition to website access to the State of the Schools Report, the Nebraska Department of Education publishes a written report card that includes information on a statewide basis. Data available on the written State Report Card are summaries of total student information, teacher quality including the percentage of teachers appropriately prepared to teach courses they are assigned, and school information. Each of the data elements that are described in total in the state report card can be examined in detail by school district and building in the State of the Schools report.

In addition to reporting student performance, teacher qualification data, and school information to the Nebraska Department of Education, all school districts report student performance information at the local level. Since each school building collects and reports data by standard, the roadmap for school improvement is developed within each local community.

Equity – Including All Students

Nebraska's goal for high achievement places an emphasis on "ALL" students. The following highlights some of the efforts underway to ensure that "all" students are included and supported.

Special Education

As the state moves toward the continuous improvement monitoring needs assessment and conducting self-assessment, there is a focus on IDEA and compliance for children with disabilities. A data driven process will continue to ensure the major components of IDEA are realized and children with disabilities throughout the state are benefiting. One area under review will be professional and paraprofessional development. At the completion of the self-assessment, planning will occur with extensive public input. A direct link is made within the Office of Special Education Programs "clusters" for self-assessment to address earlier identification and intervention for children with reading and behavior needs through highly qualified staff.

Professional development activities supporting STARS have included:

- Basic Six Traits Writing Workshops for Special Educators
- Standards Based IEP Goal Writing Workshops
- Classroom Assessment Training for Special Educators
- Workshops for Para-Educators
- Student Assistance Team/Assistive Technology Workshops

- Flexible Funding Projects
- Personal Development and Support Model Training for School Improvement in Natural and Least Restrictive Environments (Preschool)
- SpecialCare Training Curriculum (Preschool)
- Para-Educator Job Coaching Training and Manual
- Transition Summer Institutes and Inservices
- Transition Follow-up Studies
- Mini-Grants to Local Transition Teams
- Grant to the University of Nebraska - Lincoln for School Transition Specialists Endorsement
- STAR Grants
- Preschool Combination Programs

In addition to the activities listed above, the Special Populations Office has collaboratively participated and supported many related activities and projects in the Department.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997, section 612(a)(14) requires the State to have a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). The CSPD is designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified special education, regular education, and related services personnel that meet the requirements for a State improvement plan relating to personnel development. CSPD responsibilities include:

1. Needs assessment
2. Inservice training
3. Preservice training
4. Dissemination
5. Adoption of promising practices
6. Evaluation
7. Review and updating of the personnel development section of the State Improvement plan
8. Review planning of technical assistance for agencies involved in personnel development

While grant projects are focused on local/regional implementation, CSPD leadership has been instrumental in initiating professional development activities meeting statewide training needs. For example, CSPD funding supported training of special education/regular education teams to meet the need for implementing the statewide trait-based writing assessment.

Similarly, in conjunction with the efforts of The Nebraska State Improvement Grant (NSIG), CSPD has initiated professional development activities aimed at preparing schools with an awareness level of best practices in positive behavior support systems. Together, the NSIG and CSPD have partnered with the University of Oregon's Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior to provide training for school-based leadership teams. Teams have received extensive training on processes to implement positive behavior support systems in their schools. The Building Effective Schools Together (BEST) model requires a minimum of three days of training along with follow-up team consultation support and assistance in designing behavior/discipline information management systems. Teams utilize a framework of research-based processes to implement practices to teach and reinforce expected behaviors. By creating a school-wide climate conducive to learning as a foundation, then interventions designed for small groups and individuals who may need more intensive support have an increased likelihood of success. The local leadership teams are equipped to continue ongoing development based upon analysis of data guiding decision-making and monitoring effectiveness of implementation.

CSPD also supports schools of high need. A priority has been placed on working with Native American Schools. The "Success for All" program has been proven to be especially effective in raising academic achievement for students with disabilities. Students reading at grade level by end of second grade have a greater opportunity of graduating from high school. The "Success for All" program has also shown decreased rates of special education referral and placement. "Success for All" has been adopted in two of Nebraska's four schools located on Native American reservations.

Nebraska State Improvement Grant (NSIG)

Following the most recent monitoring visit by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services and a series of stakeholder meetings, Nebraska stakeholders identified four areas requiring preservice and inservice attention in order to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities. They included: 1) behavior management/discipline, 2) instructional improvement, 3) transition services, and 4) parent involvement. Nebraska applied for and received funds for assistance with improving the infrastructure in local education agencies related to research-based behavior improvement and instructional strategies, and to assure parent involvement in these activities. Specifically the grant supports the development of a research-based behavior and instructional improvement academy.

The Nebraska State Improvement Grant has two goals:

- **Personnel Quality:** Nebraska will initiate systemic reforms and build local capacity to provide, improve, and expand services to students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. Evidence will be provided to support the need to build the capacity of LEAs to change systems to improve behavior and instructional strategies.
- **Personnel Quantity:** Nebraska will ensure an adequate supply of personnel to meet the needs of students with disabilities and their families, and students and

families of their non-disabled peers. Funds for this goal are provided through resources from other state and federal programs.

Three intermediate outcomes will result from the project:

- 1) Skills of personnel in the area of research-based positive behavior management and instruction will be improved.
- 2) Systems will be aligned and policy changed at the state and local levels to support students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.
- 3) Increased leveraging of NDE policies and resources will occur to support future LEA capacity building for research-based positive behavioral management and instruction. The impact of the project will be higher achievement scores, higher graduation rates, and improved post-school outcomes for students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.

School Continuous Improvement Process Grants

The purpose of SCIP Projects are to strengthen local school improvement efforts in the area of special needs by providing support and interventions for students with behavioral needs, adapting the school environment and curriculum, involving parents in the process of improving educational outcomes, improving the transition from school to adult life, creating school-based planning teams and improving the use of paraprofessionals. Training is either site based or through the educational service units.

Specialized Areas within Special Education

The Nebraska Birth to Five System

The Nebraska B-5 System is addressing innovative service delivery and personnel development models. A series of statewide public forums and workshops determined that a unified statewide capacity building approach to personnel development was needed for implementing service provision in natural and least restrictive environments. The approach incorporates two complementary components 1) the personal development and support model and the 2) special care model. Early childhood mental health is being addressed through training that addresses assessment and mental health.

Low Incidence Disabilities

The structures to address professional development for persons who work with children who have a low incidence disability are being addressed several ways. Funding comes from either the State of Nebraska, through direct federal funding or linkages with organizations. Geographical regions have been established based on where students reside within the state.

- 1) Training of persons who work with families with children who are deaf/blind.
 - The training of persons and families who work with children who are deaf/blind involve three areas of training. Training occurs through workshops on transition, functional assessment, communication hearing and vision. Additional training is done on teaching strategies and

through University of Nebraska Lincoln summer camps. National workshops are also attended.

- 2) Training of persons who work with families with children who have autism spectrum disorders.
 - The training of persons and families who work with children who have autism spectrum disorders are training regional teams, service providers and parents based upon a needs assessment. Training is being done through the University of Nebraska Lincoln and will evolve into regional teams over the next few years. A standing committee on autism has been formed by the Governor appointed Special Education Advisory Council to support professional development and family support.
- 3) Training of persons who work with families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - Training of persons and families who work with children who are deaf or hard of hearing involves distance learning, classes and workshops. The University of Nebraska Omaha is involved in a Speech and Language Pathologist endorsement and an interpreter certificate program. An additional certificated program for educational interpreters has been developed with Front-Range Community College. Regional programs are linked with the University of Nebraska Lincoln in teacher training. There are sign language classes as well as immersion camps. A mentoring program is set up for extensive sign language. Additional workshops are held on early detection hearing intervention, and on curriculum/learning strategies. Regional workshops are also attended.

Transition from School to Adult Life

A graduate program has been developed to prepare secondary educators as transition specialists to better serve the needs of adolescents and young adults with disabilities in their career, educational and transition programming. This certification program for professional development takes 18 months to complete including practicum and internship experience. Additional workshops take place throughout the year as well as a standing committee on transition formed by the Governor appointed Special Education Advisory Council.

Native American Education

NDE's Native American Education Initiative is guided by recommendations of the Native American Education Advisory Council as well as those from local Native American Communities. Schools with high percentages of Native American students are concerned about lack of community support and absence of parental involvement. A Native American Summit is held annually to increase knowledge of successful practices. Other training includes workshops on "Cultural Competence" for Native American adults and youth, school staff, NDE staff, and other community members. The goal is to move beyond stereotypes and heal relationships that will help schools and communities function effectively to help students become successful.

Leadership Development has been the workshop focus in both Northwestern and Northeastern Nebraska communities. In cooperation with many agencies, two-week Leadership trainings are developed to help prepare individuals within the Native American communities who can assume the roles of community leaders and role models/mentors for their children and youth.

Within each community, Community Engagement Forums are being offered. It is hoped that communities will become increasingly more capable of functioning independently in the future. Such community-based groups will conduct needs assessment processes, and receive technical assistance from the Southwest CAPT Office. As these communities continue their work, culturally appropriate evaluation will be developed to help them monitor progress.

English Language Learners (ELL) Education

The ELL growth rate in the State has increased 165% from 1995 through 2001. During the 2000-01 school year, there were 291 ESL/Bilingual endorsed teachers serving Nebraska students. In addition during the same time period, 2,125 Nebraska school personnel participated in trainings or workshops to assist ELL students. The 2001-02 statewide survey identified 12,451 ELL students enrolled in Nebraska's schools. There were 6,249 immigrant children reported.

There are forty-three identified languages spoken by ELL students in Nebraska. The following languages are listed as home languages by 100 or more students in Nebraska schools:

- Spanish – 9,518
- Vietnamese – 579
- Arabic – 322
- Nuer – 371
- Korean 103
- Kurdish – 149
- Omaha – 281
- Serbo-Croatian/Bosnian – 153
- Ukrainian – 108

Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students (Title III) funds supported statewide professional development and other activities to assist personnel in meeting State and local certification and licensing requirements for teaching ELL children. At least 95% of Title III's state-allotted funds were granted to LEAs. LEA requirements included providing professional development to classroom teachers, principals, administrators, and other school or community-based personnel that was:

- Designed to improve the instruction and assessment of ELL students,
- Designed to enhance the ability of teachers to understand and use curricula, assessment, and instructional strategies,
- Based on scientifically based research, and
- Of sufficient duration and intensity to have a positive and lasting impact on the teacher's classroom performance.

To meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind, the Department will:

- Establish an ELL Objectives Task Force. This Task Force will consist of representatives from the Department, Educational Service Units, Institutions of Higher Education, and consultants knowledgeable in ELL standards to establish a State plan and timeline for completing the development of annual measurable achievement objectives for ELL children.
- The annual measurable achievement objectives will also be aligned with the state English Language Arts standards.
- This plan will be completed by the last quarter of the initial project year.

Timeline:

First quarter:

- Choose SEA, LEA and IHE representatives to serve on the ELL Objectives Task Force.
- Identify a consultant that will facilitate the process and lead the SEA in the establishment of ELL achievement objectives.
- Convene the first meeting of this Task Force.
- Identify the tasks and activities needed to complete the ELL achievement objectives.

Second quarter-Third quarters:

- Complete the tasks and activities as identified by the Task Force.

Fourth quarter:

- Finalize the ELL Achievement Objectives
- Publish and distribute the ELL Achievement Objectives to all LEAs
- Conduct workshops on the implementation of the ELL Achievement Objectives

The State has recently purchased access for all Nebraska schools to the Translation Library. The Translation Library of Educational Policy and Compliance Forms is a comprehensive collection of legal and policy documents commonly used in school districts. Over 60 documents within the library are translated into 23 languages for effective communication with limited and non-English-speaking families. Each document is professionally translated, typeset, edited, desktop published to mirror the English version.

The National Origin Project website will soon be available for Nebraska Educators. The site will include information regarding ELL students and their unique needs. Users will be able to access information regarding:

- Current legislation,
- ELL data,
- ELL Knowledge Base (varied information focusing on the diverse learner),
- Upcoming national, state, and regional workshops, and
- The Bilingual Special Education Project

Migrant Education

The priority services for Title I Part C (Migrant Education) under the No Child Left Behind Act, focuses on migratory children who are failing or most at-risk of failing to meet the content standards of the state and local school. The project Needs Assessment must include preschool children, dropouts, and resident-only children. The State's Needs Assessment determines specific objectives to be set forth in the State Plan. Each project is required to coordinate with all other available programs (local, state, and federal programs; Goals 2000; the Reading First; Early Childhood; JTPA; etc.) and the required goals and objectives to meet the special needs of migratory children in their area. Projects must collaborate with government units and private agencies in their locale. Nebraska projects are also required to pursue partnerships to enhance the opportunity for families and communities to work toward common goals.

Based on the operational management and the needs assessment, the professional development theme includes monthly meetings for directors, recruiters, data entry specialists for: Project Smart (Interstate), NCLB Law, Project Requirements (assessment, etc.), StarLAB, HEP/CAMP (Interstate), Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS), ELL Technology, Recruitment Strategies (Interstate), Binational Teacher Planning (Interstate), Literacy/family literacy training, building partnership strategies, Reading/Math strategies, effective use of media, Project ELLIS training, Rosetta Stone Training, Oxford Bilingual Course Training, Strategies for Migrant Middle Schools, Interstate Networking (Interstate), INEA (Mexican Government Program) Training, MIS2000 Training (Annual), and other training as needed by projects or needs assessment.

Multicultural Education

The State Director of multicultural education provides a variety of professional development opportunities. Multicultural awareness workshops are also available. These are general workshops that provide participants with information on valuing diversity and/or multicultural education and specific ways in which multicultural education should be incorporated into the classroom.

“A Framework for Understanding Poverty” workshops are offered across the state. This workshop, based on the work by Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D., provides the participants with general information regarding issues raised in this subject area with the intent of increasing knowledge and understanding of the poverty culture. Participants are provided information on: how economic class affects behaviors and mindsets, why students from generational poverty often fear being educated, the “hidden rules” with economic classes, discipline

interventions that improve behavior, and the eight resources that make a difference in success.

There are other projects (such as those funded through CSPD) across the state that are initiating awareness of culturally/linguistic diverse learners.

Early Childhood

Nebraska is a birth mandate state for children with disabilities. Services to other groups of prekindergarten age children are limited to 10 state-funded combination programs and a few programs funded through Title 1 and parent fees. Head Start serves approximately 5,300 children, including infants, toddlers, and pregnant women enrolled in Early Head Start.

The Department of Education provides professional development through the Early Childhood Training Center and 14 Regional Training Coalitions. The Early Childhood Training Center is a statewide project of NDE that provides services designed to support the professional development of early care and education staff for all children between birth and five years of age in all settings (school-based programs, Head Start, child care). Professional development information has been a focus with additional work on enhancement, coordination of professional development, opportunities across the state and promotion of an interdisciplinary model of training. In addition, the Early Childhood Training Center provides a resource library available for free loan to all providers, coordination with families and child care providers as well as links with the Early Childhood Regional Training Coalitions.

Quality early childhood program development is supported largely through consultation and professional development activities. Other annual and/or ad hoc meetings, individualized consultation and technical assistance, materials and resources (both printed and online), program-to-program coaching/mentoring supports are accessible to publicly-funded early childhood programs, including Head Start, Even Start, and other state and federally funded early childhood programs.

Programs/Services Directly Supported through the Office of Children and Families:

- Early Childhood Grant Programs --
 - State funds to support pre-k programs based on serving all children in an integrated/inclusive setting thereby supporting children's development and learning and transition to school.
- Even Start Family Literacy Programs
 - Provide subgrants to nine Even Start grantees across Nebraska that provide a comprehensive family literacy service to young children and their families that also supports and fosters community collaboration among early care and education entities, schools, community-based organizations.
- Head Start-State Collaboration Office activities
 - Support and facilitate partnerships among Head Start and state systems in an effort to build a more comprehensive early childhood system based on federal Head Start Bureau priorities for Collaboration Offices (e.g. Education, Professional Development, Partnerships with Schools and Child Care, Health, Children with Disabilities, Family Literacy, Homeless Children, Welfare Reform, Community Service).

- Encouraging Head Start partnerships with child care providers, school districts and other community-based programs to maximize funding and support transition to school.
- Supporting parent involvement activities through coordinating parent focus groups and planning for ongoing regional and local parent networking sessions.

Programs/Services Linked with the Office of Children and Families:

- Title I – Homeless Education
 - Coordinate special programs and initiatives with Head Start-State Collaboration Office and local Head Start programs to provide outreach to homeless children.
- High Ability Learners
 - Respond to parents and make referrals for child assessments related to high ability learners.
 - Respond to schools with questions regarding high ability young learners as needed.
- Special Populations
 - Provide technical assistance and consultation to schools and ESU's related to building inclusive classrooms and settings for young children based on federal mandates of "natural environments."
 - Provide ongoing technical assistance and grants for Early Development Network Planning Region Teams to support the needs of parents, families, and schools/ESUs related to building capacity in serving children with special needs.
 - Support CHILD FIND activities.
 - Provide competitive grant funds for higher education to support curriculum reform in preservice training in area of special education using a collaborative approach.

Nebraska Early Language and Literacy and Learning Connection (NELLC)

Nebraska's Early Language and Literacy Learning Connection, funded through the Federal Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Grant, is a professional development program that engages partners from higher education, early childhood programs, community members and families to improve children's early language and literacy learning experiences, thus contributing to their success as learners and preventing children from encountering reading difficulties once they enter school. Early childhood teachers and parents have the opportunity to participate in a 22 week Heads Up! Reading course. This distance learning course is research-based and offered throughout the state.

The grant also includes participation in Read for Joy, a workshop in two formats. One format is to raise awareness of parents and others in the community to support language and literacy with their young members. The second format is to expand this training for early childhood educators and caregivers.

The third component of the grant is First Connections, a web-based credit-bearing course developed in Nebraska and designed for those working with infants and toddlers, especially in rural and isolated urban settings. The course addresses the entire range of infant/toddler development and contains a strong early language and literacy component.

Professional Development is coordinated and/or supported by NDE Office of Children and Families, the Early Childhood Training Center, Head Start-State Collaboration Office in cooperation with the following entities:

- Early Childhood Regional Training Coalitions
 - Support all early childhood professionals in their area (child care, Head Start, Children with Special Needs).
- Early Development Network/Early Childhood Special Education – Planning Region Teams
 - Support early childhood professionals and families to address needs of children with verified special needs and natural environments (inclusion, integrated programs).
- Head Start Quality Improvement Centers
 - Support Head Start program development (includes Migrant Head Start and American Indian Programs Branch Head Start).
- Title I
 - Support school districts to use funds for pre-kindergarten programs and services
 - Emphasis on serving homeless children
 - ESL programs/services via Migrant Education
- High Ability Learners (NDE)
 - Consultation and technical assistance to parents, teachers
- Professional Early Childhood Associations (conferences and events):
 - Nebraska Association for Education of Young Children (TEACH Early Childhood® wage and scholarship enhancement licensee for Nebr.)
 - Nebraska Family Child Care Association
 - Nebraska Head Start Association
 - Nebraska School Age Care Alliance
 - Council for Exceptional Children
 - Nebraska Association for Gifted Children
- NDE support of Higher Education initiatives
 - SCRIPT – supports change and reform in curriculum and preservice training focused in schools of special education and their collaborative partners
 - NELLC – federal USDE grant focused on early language and literacy professional development opportunity that supports curriculum change and preservice needs
 - University of Nebraska Family Strengths Conference – Head Start-State Collaboration Office provides direct funds to help support this conference.

Professional Development Initiatives include:

- Parent education, training, and support
 - Title I Parent Involvement Conference
 - Special Populations Parent to Parent Conference
- Early literacy – preparing children to learn to read
 - Read for Joy – a community-based literacy workshop for professionals, parents, schools and community members
 - HeadsUp! Reading – a distance learning course for any early childhood teacher and/or caregiver that is available for college credit accessible at nearly 40+ sites across the state
 - *First Connections*- an online training/course specific to providers working with infants and toddlers. Also available for college credit.
 - Nebraska's Early Literacy and Language Learning Connection – a two-year federal USDE grant that supports both statewide and focused community (based on ESL, Title I schools, poverty issues and directly involve Native American early childhood programs/schools.)
 - Early Childhood Connections Conference – annual statewide early childhood collaborative conference supported and jointly sponsored by NDE, Early Childhood Training Center, Head Start-State Collaboration Office, and professional associations.
 - Ready to Learn, Nebraska Educational Telecommunications – Head Start-State Collaboration Office has established partnership on behalf of all Head Start grantees (project will be completed in 2002) and Even Start grantees (begin 2003).

Career and Technical Education

Career and Technical Education has a renewed emphasis on academic achievement, assessment, and accountability. Some of the activities focused on academic achievement are listed below:

Activities and Initiatives:

1. Nebraska participated in multiple national projects to assist with the design of the Data Quality Initiative for the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE). This consisted of workgroups focused on accountability, reporting, incentives and sanctions, and nontraditional training. This national participation was transitioned to designing the accountability system for Nebraska.
2. With regard to technical/occupational skill attainment, Nebraska has participated in all five of the OVAE Building Linkages projects except for Health. Nebraska conducted a national pilot site for the Manufacturing Linkages project, and the Information Technology career cluster project. We are also participating in the career cluster consortiums for Transportation, Distribution and Logistics, and Arts and Communication. Nebraska is also engaged with the Agriculture and Construction projects and is monitoring the other projects in progress. These projects have assisted with the alignment of academic and skill standards with assessment, curriculum, and student achievement of Career and Technical Education students.

3. At the local level, Nebraska held a series of regional meetings to provide technical assistance on the accountability system for schools, consortiums, and Community Colleges; including Nontraditional projects and Tech Prep.
4. Nebraska uses a multi-faceted monitoring process focusing on the core indicators, levels of performance, and statements of assurances in the State Plan. Tech Prep monitoring has evolved into a "program improvement process" using quality indicators related to the focus group report: "Tech Prep: Building a Framework for Future Research, Evaluation, and Program Practice." Started the process of enhancing the same "program improvement process" for all LEAs as a part of the monitoring process.
5. At the postsecondary level, Nebraska is continuing an effort to align program courses and the numbering system statewide among all public Community Colleges. From this, a consistent process of program delivery, student assessment and competency development will result.
6. Nebraska is one of eight states participating in an Integrated Performance and Benchmarking System. The system will share a set of core data and performance indicators, an electronic harvesting system, and a program database resource shared between USOE and the states.
7. In the area of standards, assessment and accountability, Career and Technical Education will cooperatively participate in common or consistent approaches of performance assessment to reduce burden on school districts and community colleges that receive federal funding from multiple sources. This will allow for greater consistency and commonality in performance measurement and will make data and reporting more understandable and useful to parents, students, and policy-makers.

State Goal 2. All students will be taught by quality staff.

Goal 2 – All students will be taught by quality staff incorporates the NCLB goal and performance indicators for teachers and paraprofessionals:

NCLB Goal

By 2005-06, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.

Indicators

The percentage of classes being taught by "highly qualified" teachers (as the term is defined in section 9101(23) of the ESEA), in the aggregate and in "high-poverty" schools (as defined in section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA).

The percentage of teachers receiving high-quality professional development.

The percentage of paraprofessionals who are qualified.

NDE is currently involved in several partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) that focus on highly qualified teachers. The Nebraska Partnership for Quality Teacher

Education Project, the P16 Initiative, and the Statewide Teacher Education Project Coordinating Council (STEPCC) have goals that address teacher quality and teacher quantity.

Specific projects include:

- Aligning standards and assessments in mathematics and language arts with postsecondary institution admission standards and assessments.
- Working with Nebraska higher education institutions to develop a standards base, multiple-assessment system to assess teacher education candidate preparation and quality.
- Reviewing and examining content and pedagogy requirements for teacher education candidates.
- Supporting activities to enhance student assessment literacy and processes in teacher education programs.
- Evaluating Nebraska's certification and endorsement processes.
- Designing a comprehensive, web-based data/institutional monitoring system to assess effectiveness of teacher education programs, including a graduate follow-up system.
- Implementing recruitment and retention strategies, including an emphasis on diversity, to address Nebraska's need for quality teachers, particularly in high poverty and high needs schools.
- Research focused on Nebraska teacher supply/demand.

The endorsement requirements for Elementary Education teachers in Chapter 24, *Regulations for Certificate Endorsements* currently includes language consistent with the intent of Section 1202, (d)(3)(A and B), Reading First, for purposes of providing professional development for inservice and preservice teachers. Similar language is found in the endorsement requirements for Early Childhood Education teachers, who are prepared to teach Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 3 students. A new early childhood education unified endorsement has recently been adopted to better prepare teachers for teaching integrated, inclusive programs.

All teacher education programs currently address Nebraska's challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards, state assessments, and state and local curricula. These issues are addressed in methods courses, field experience settings, and student teaching. At the graduate level, these issues are also being addressed as a leadership function for teachers and administrators who are completing graduate work in education.

The Nebraska Partnership for Quality Teacher Education Project (NPQTE) has focused on helping teacher education programs implement Nebraska Student Standards as part of the preparation of beginning teachers. Activities within this project are designed to assure the preparation of quality teachers through collaborative efforts with K-12 schools. The higher education institutions participating in this project have also initiated professional development and recruitment activities for Para-professionals working in high-need schools.

This project is funded under Section 202 of the Higher Education Act and expires during the 2003-04 academic year.

A statewide "Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology" Catalyst grant is assisting teacher education programs with the development of higher quality technology skills in faculty and pre-service teachers, providing technology-based resources to improve the quality of teaching and learning in K-12 schools, and strengthening the partnerships between K-12 and IHEs through the use of technology as instructional tools.

There are a number of other federal grants within the Nebraska Department of Education that represent collaboration between higher education and K-12 schools to improve the quality of teachers and principals. The Gates Foundation grant is designed to improve the technology skills of school administrators. The Connections grant utilized technology to strengthen instruction in schools with hard to serve populations such as Native American schools, the Nebraska Youth Development Center for incarcerated youth, and others. Another federal grant, Nvision, provides foreign language instruction to elementary students in a number of schools in southeast Nebraska and utilizes the technology of distance learning classrooms to provide professional development to the teachers and quality instruction to the students.

There are a number of activities underway in the State that address high quality staff:

- The technology skills of teachers are being addressed through the provisions of Rule 20, *Standards for the Approval of Teacher Education Programs*, and the accompanying guidelines. The Nebraska Technology Competencies are part of the requirements for completion of a teacher education program in a Nebraska institution of higher education.
- A mentor teacher program is being provided to all eligible school districts through lottery funds. Evaluation of that program is completed in cooperation with the NPQTE grant.
- A task force has been evaluating the teacher certification standards and developing an alternative certification proposal. The results of this task force's work are currently undergoing review by the State Board of Education and the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education which serves as an advisory committee to the State Board on matters concerning teacher certification and teacher education.
- The NPQTE grant has provided funding in several recruitment areas: Teacher World, a camp to encourage high school students to consider teaching as their career choice; Teach in Nebraska, a free website which serves as a statewide clearinghouse for listing teacher/administrator vacancies in Nebraska schools and clearinghouse for linking teacher/administrator vacancies in Nebraska schools with qualified individuals seeking positions. IHEs are utilizing special recruitment strategies to encourage low-income, nontraditional and minority students to consider teaching as a career.
- The Nebraska Legislature has approved legislation, The Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program (which is not currently funded), to provide a scholarship/loan forgiveness program for teacher education students that would encourage them to

seek preparation in content shortage areas and teach in sparsely populated rural areas.

- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood is a scholarship/wage enhancement initiative designed to support the acquisition of degrees in early childhood by staff in programs of all types. The results are intended to increase the educational qualifications of those working with/teaching young children, to improve compensation of the early childhood workforce and increase retention of well-qualified early care and education staff. This initiative offers scholarships for associate and bachelor degrees. T.E.A.C.H. program began in 2001 and expects to award 100 scholarships by October 2002.

Identified needs for State Goal 2 include:

- Higher education needs to be included in the definition of professional development and considered as a professional development provider throughout the Act.
- Professional associations need to be included as eligible providers of professional development throughout the Act.
- Community colleges and institutions of higher education need to develop articulated programs that can provide the training for paraprofessionals to become highly qualified as required in Section 1119 of NCLB.
- A statewide database needs to be developed that can be used by all LEAs and the SEA to monitor the progress of students, the assessments being used, and the results of the work of high quality teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and support service personnel.
- A statewide assessment system is also needed that can provide valid and reliable assessments of student progress and serve as a data system from which LEAs can develop their local applications.
- The SEA needs to identify effective models available for use in professional development planning by the LEAs so they can prepare quality applications for use of the funds that are subgranted in Title I and Title II. Any data about the effectiveness of programs such as the Eisenhower Professional Development State Grant and Class-Size Reduction Program should be analyzed and made available to the SEA and LEAs for use in formulation of plans and applications.
- A statewide advisory group is needed to determine what activities should be priorities for state funds under Title II, Part A.

Nebraska has traditionally defined highly qualified teachers as those who are teaching content that is reflected by an appropriate endorsement on the certificate and are thus “appropriately prepared”. Chapter 10, Accreditation of Public Schools (page 16) requires that:

- 80% of all secondary instructional units are taught by an appropriately prepared teacher.

Data: State Report Card, Personnel/Data Center

- 95% of all elementary instructional units must be taught by an appropriately prepared teacher.

Data: Personnel/Data Center

- 90% percent of all middle grades instruction must be taught by an appropriately prepared teacher.

Data: Personnel/Data Center for general information, information regarding the teacher qualifications relative to the following is not maintained by NDE--it is kept at the local level.

- Grades 7 and 8 require a middle grades endorsement or an appropriate secondary endorsement. Teachers with an elementary endorsement may teach in grades 7 and 8 if they acquire six credit hours per year toward the middle grades endorsement or participate in staff development in accordance with a local mission and plan for education of middle grade students.
 - Grades 4-6 require an elementary endorsement or a middle grades endorsement.
 - Grade 9 requires an appropriate secondary endorsement or a middle grades endorsement.
 - Teachers not holding an appropriate endorsement may be assigned to the middle grades if they acquire six credit hours per year toward a middle grades endorsement.
- Pre-kindergarten programs must be coordinated by a staff member who holds a Nebraska Teaching Certificate with an endorsement in early childhood education. School-based prekindergarten programs require teachers who hold a Nebraska Teaching Certificate with an endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special education.

Nebraska currently does not have a system established for ensuring that all paraprofessionals are highly qualified. The activities that will be required to establish a system of records and reporting include:

- Define the requirements for acceptable formal state and local assessments that would appropriately assess competency in instructional reading, mathematics, and writing and pre-reading, pre-writing, and pre-mathematics.
 - Select a list of assessments that are appropriate for paraprofessionals.
 - Establish appropriate passing scores on selected standardized tests for paraprofessionals.
- Define the duties and categories of non-certificated personnel that would be required to meet these qualifications.
 - Develop State Board policy and Rules and requirements for certification of paraprofessionals.

- Establish a reporting system based on these requirements and develop rules and regulations.
- Restructure the teacher certification computer system or develop a new paraprofessional computer system that is connected to institutions of higher education for sharing information.
- Establish a monitoring system to review reports and check accuracy and quality of responses.
- Work with institutions of higher education, including community colleges, to ensure that training opportunities are available for currently employed paraprofessionals to achieve the required qualifications.

Proposed timeline:

2001-02 School Year

- Initial notification of Title I requirements for hiring new paraprofessionals.
 - March – Information included in a mailing to all districts that included a CD of P. L. 107-110.
 - April – Information on requirements for paraprofessionals presented to about 500 participants in the annual Spring Title I conferences.
 - May – Information included in Title I application packet.
 - August – Districts will be required to describe a plan for paraprofessionals in the District Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement.
- When guidance is available on paraprofessional requirements, distribute guidance and provide technical assistance to districts on implementing it.

2002-03 School Year

- A Task Force of representatives of districts, organizations, community colleges, colleges and the university, Department and ESU staff will be created to address the requirements listed above.
- NDE will begin developing a Rule and Board Policy to incorporate the recommendations of the Task Force.
- NDE will begin designing a computer system to maintain records on paraprofessionals.
- Provide districts with the recommendations of the Task Force on appropriate assessments for hiring new paraprofessionals.
- Work with developers and providers to define a list of acceptable assessments.

2003-04 School Year

- Process the Rule for certification of paraprofessionals.
- Provide technical assistance and training to districts in reporting requirements.

- Complete the computer system for recording certification.
- Develop and implement a reporting system for districts.

State Goal 3. All students will learn in a safe, supportive learning environment.

Goal 3 – All students will learn in a safe, supportive learning environment incorporates the following NCLB goal and performance indicator:

All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.

Indicators

The number of persistently dangerous schools as defined by the State.

In spring 1998, the Nebraska Department of Education began efforts to review and make recommendations toward ensuring school safety. These efforts resulted in the formation of an advisory committee. The culmination of these efforts was a set of recommendations presented to the State Board in March of 2000 to add specific safety requirements to Rule 10 (Accreditation Rule).

The language stated that every school district must have:

- 1) A safety plan,
- 2) A safety committee, and
- 3) An annual review of their safety plan and facilities.

In September of 2000, a booklet (*Considerations for Nebraska Schools In Reviewing School Safety*) with the new language was distributed to all superintendents and principals throughout Nebraska. In addition, the NDE Coordinator of School Safety, conducted numerous workshops and videoconference presentations statewide to explain the new rules and answer questions.

The School Safety Coordinator conducts statewide trainings on the following topics:

- Hazardous Materials Awareness
- Domestic Terrorism
- Incident Management
- School Safety Overview
- Managing School Safety
- Safety Plans and Reviews

- Crisis Response and Drills
- Work Place Safety
- Bus Driver Safety
- Terrorism
- Multi-hazard Safety Program for Schools

Grants through Title IV, the Safe and Drug-Free School and Communities Act, support alcohol, drug, tobacco and/or violence prevention initiatives within the school. Nearly every school in Nebraska participates in this program, either through their own grant or as part of a Consortium. Five percent of the state grant has been allowed for training and technical assistance.

- NDE hosted a day-long training on use of the Logic Model in prevention planning, as well as a day long Trainer of Trainers. This planning model is based on the four Principles of Effectiveness -- needs assessment, measurable objectives, use of research based programs, and measurement of progress toward goals.
- NDE supported a day-long conference on strength based approaches toward working with youth, as well as a two day additional training for 20 people to be recognized as Asset Builder trainers. Each of these people has committed to deliver (this year) two days of Asset Training for staff in schools. Regular meetings are held with these trainers to provide additional resources and technical assistance.
- Student Assistance Program (SAP) training has also been supported. Last summer advanced training for SAP teams working with high-risk children with a potential for suicide was held. This summer the advanced training is expected to involve small group facilitation on working with youth as they re-enter a school from a drug/alcohol treatment program. Core SAP Team Trainings were held in Scottsbluff last fall and will be held in Omaha this spring.

State Goal 4. All schools and NDE will be learning organizations.

The process of becoming a learning organization requires the involvement of all personnel in a dialogue about the focus of the organization and the strategies and activities (the real work) to be conducted to define its goals and reach them. A learning organization is one that reflects on the processes being used and uses the information gained from this analysis to adjust work and responsibilities. A learning organization supports professional growth of individuals, study teams to create a community of learners, cross-team work to enhance collaborative learning and exchange of ideas.

In schools, the “real work” is assuring that all students, including those with special needs, achieve to their highest potential. This requires the school to analyze:

- all curriculum (PreK-12) to ensure that essential skills and knowledge are included;
- assessment systems that address skills and knowledge in the context of the classroom to ensure that assessment is used for learning;
- practices and policies to ensure that no students are being left behind;
- instructional approaches and strategies to ensure that they have been proven to be effective and are research based;
- organizational structure and management to ensure that appropriate resources are allocated and utilized to meet goals;
- professional development to ensure that it is focused on goals, cohesive in nature, and ongoing, and individualized to meet the needs of teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals.

In the Department of Education, the “real work” is assisting all schools to be high-performing. This involves:

- collaboration among teams to coordinate resources and expertise to assist schools;
- developing cross-team groups to assist districts in developing and implementing the District Comprehensive Plans for School Improvement;
- collaborating with partners – ESUs and Higher Education, to provide expanded service to districts, schools and communities;
- coordinating and consolidating federal program resources to provide statewide initiatives focused on improving student performance and increasing teacher and administrator capacity;
- sharing the experience and expertise of staff to increase our capacity to work with and serve others; and
- collaborating with agency partners (Federal and State, Health and Human Services and others) to assure that children of all ages receive the support needed to reach their potential.

The Leadership of the Department has been involved in a process to be a learning organization over the last two years through a project with McREL and the guidance of Myron Kellnor-Rogers, an international organizational consultant. One activity of this process was a two-day Design Lab held in May 2002 at which more than 50 members from across the Department assisted in developing the state goals for this plan. In addition, the Department will be organizing cross-program teams to provide more individualized and integrated technical assistance to all school districts.

The cross-program teams will include representation from federal programs, curriculum and instruction, accreditation, technology, staff development, special education and career and technical education. Each Nebraska school system will be assigned to a Department cross-

program team. The Department staff involved will be all those who currently work with directly with schools in any capacity or role. This includes the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Leadership Council members, and team members from Curriculum and Instruction (including Career and Technical Education), Technology, Professional Development, Early Childhood, Special Education and all federal programs.

The initial responsibility of these cross-program teams will be to assist assigned schools to develop a preliminary comprehensive district improvement plan for the 2002-03 school year and a final comprehensive district improvement plan for the 2003-04 school year. The district plan will be modeled after the State's Comprehensive plan with a focus on improving student achievement through coordinating and integrating efforts and activities including federal programs. The advantages are multiple to all involved. NDE staff will gain an in-depth understanding of their districts' strengths, efforts and needs as well as a greater understanding of the role and responsibilities of the many components and programs, including federal programs, supporting school improvement efforts at state and local levels. Districts will gain assistance in developing their plans as well as an on-going advocate in the Department to facilitate requests and resources. The staff of the federal programs will retain responsibility for expertise in program management and compliance responsibilities.

The Comprehensive State Plan for Improvement provides a vehicle for coordinating professional development activities and opportunities provided through the Department of Education and other agencies, including higher education. The Advisory Committee for the State Plan includes representatives of major organizations and agencies serving education throughout the State.

Professional Development Theme

Since Nebraska has a large number of school districts, Educational Service Units (regional service centers) are critical to the provision of quality professional development. NDE provides leadership and support to the ESU system to ensure that professional development services lead to knowledgeable staff able to implement standards, assessment and instruction. There are 18 ESUs with specific geographic service areas employing over 50 staff developers who facilitate school improvement and staff development with all districts in their area.

In 1998, the State Board of Education adopted a Staff Development Policy that describes effective staff development at the building level and job embedded. This policy further describes the partnership of NDE and the ESU system in providing quality professional development. The "Indicators for Effective Staff Development" identify specific practices of quality professional development used by ESUs and districts to guide training efforts.

All ESU staff developers were interviewed to identify professional development needs across the State. As a group, they identified and prioritized the following:

1. Instructional Strategies:
How to identify specific needs and assist schools in using a variety of research-based instructional strategies. Specific areas of need listed included reading, MCREL (Midwest Center Regional Educational Laboratory) strategies, and multiple strategies for diverse learners.
2. Using Data and Tying to Standards:

Need practice working with real data including: NRT (norm-referenced tests), CRT (criterion-referenced tests), statistical analysis, data retreats, computer management, grading, using data for school improvement and instructional decisions.

3. School Improvement Planning:
How to identify where schools are in the process of school improvement and to create a “toolbox” of strategies.
4. Leadership:
How to plan and facilitate leadership academies for administrators

Each year, the CSPD Committee conducts a process for identifying areas in which training is needed. This process is responsive to the variety of needs assessment sources in Nebraska. The CSPD Committee recognizes the limited use of a single source needs assessment and has implemented a multi-source needs assessment procedure.

The CSPD Committee meets four times each year to review and discuss staff development issues. Information is often presented by local education agency staff and by persons who provide training. This formative process allows the CSPD Committee members to be knowledgeable about current training needs in Nebraska.

At the spring meeting of the CSPD Committee, the training needs are established for the next school year. Information is gleaned from a variety of sources:

- Data from CSPD projects, including surveys and evaluation results,
- Statewide needs assessment surveys,
- Data from non-CSPD training programs, and
- Nebraska Department of Education staff, CSPD Committee members and input from participants at the annual staff development conference.

The annual staff development conference each spring serves to culminate the previous year's activities and to initiate the new yearly cycle. Presentations are made on the activities and results of current CSPD projects and new training initiatives are solicited from participants.

The CSPD Committee has identified the following areas of training needs for the 2001 - 2002 request for proposals (RFP):

1. Behavior/Classroom Management
2. Inclusion - Curriculum Adaptation/Modification
3. Assessment/Standards
4. Transition
5. Reading

6. Learning/Teaching Strategies
7. Special Inservice Training/Sharing Projects in Special Education

The CSPD Committee has identified the following areas of training needs for the 2001 - 2002 Higher Education Teacher Preparation Programs Special Education Projects request for proposals (RFP):

1. Positive Behavioral supports/ classroom management
2. Inclusion – curriculum adaptation/modification
3. Strategies to incorporate state standards and assessments in curriculum development
4. Reading
5. Learning/teaching strategies, and
6. Transition from school to post-secondary education or the world of work.

A unique aspect of Nebraska's approach to early childhood is its Early Childhood Training Center and web of 14 Regional Training Coalitions (boundaries congruent with the ESUs). This system that is supported through a combination of education, health and human services and Head Start resources, works to assure that all staff working with young children in home-center- and school-based settings have access to quality training. This system enables Nebraska to:

- Meet local training needs,
- Coordinate existing and new training opportunities,
- Collaborate to open training across program settings,
- Support professional development and program improvement, and
- Increase the use of technology for collaboration and training.

Using Technology to Improve Achievement Theme

The following State led or initiated activities and efforts provide a history and a profile of educational technology in Nebraska.

Technology Planning and Infrastructure Development:

- Established through the leadership of the Educational Technology Consortium, an advisory group to the State Board of Education, a State Technology Plan.

- Provided the technology infrastructure and staff development support to schools through disbursement of \$9,000,000 in competitive grants for technology and staff development through the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund Grants.
- Completed certification and re-certification of 440 school district technology plans. Plans now reside in an electronic database which easily and rapidly provides access to technology trends, equipment, goals and objectives of schools reporting and provides summary reporting and projections.
- Completed construction of distance learning facilities in the Technology Center that provide two way interactive video/audio communication among 100 sites in eastern Nebraska. The system will have potential to connect with at least 230 other two way sites located statewide. It will be used for consultation, conferencing, and staff development among NDE staff and schools and ESUs.
- Completed construction of a link to the Nebraska Video Conferencing Network that provides two-way interactive video/audio communications to 27 state government locations statewide. Intended use is to provide a vehicle for consultation, conferencing and staff development.
- Annually conducted a statewide K-12 distance learning survey and summarized and published the results. The survey dealt with current utilization of the distance-learning infrastructure.
- Actively working with NITC, DOC, Ed. Council and ESUs to establish a statewide backbone in place and in expanding the bandwidth of the existing infrastructure.
- Working with cable companies, TeleCos, NET and ESUs to provide gateways for better inter-pod communications.
- Assisted schools and ESUs in applying for and receiving 18 million dollars in line cost savings from local carriers through the Universal Services Fund, E-Rate.
- Established through cooperative efforts with DOC and NET a distance learning capability and broadcast capability from the State Board meeting room that can reach all schools and ESU's in Nebraska.
- Annually contract with NETV for satellite delivery of Schools TeleLearning Service classroom resources to all Nebraska schools. This is now being digitized for webbased delivery.
- Annually updated the status of all schools with or planning to have distance learning (DL) classrooms and publish the data and information.
- Researched and developed prototype streaming video system for the electronic dissemination of resources and presentations.
- Developed an electronic teacher locator system to assist Nebraska educators in contacting colleagues, either individuals or by common groups. It will find mailing addresses as well as provide e-mail addresses in a limited way.

- Administer and facilitate the School Technology Fund responsible for the Internet connection of all Nebraska school districts and the internal connecting (LAN) of all building and classrooms within the districts. (\$13,000,000).

Professional Development:

- Administered the provisions of the Technology Literacy Challenge Grant Funds of which approximately \$4,000,000 was “earmarked” for technology related staff development.
- Provide information to schools on the use of staff development programming through the Satellite Education Resources Consortium.
- Promote the use of Schools TeleLearning Service materials through on-site and electronic workshops.
- Participate in the implementation of three federal Educational Technology Challenge Grants in Nebraska, all of which are designed specifically to provide staff development for teachers in the effective use of technology in the classroom. (\$16,000,000).
- Completed and are now implementing the revised Technology Competencies for Nebraska Educators. Implementation includes the marketing of the Competencies and their adoption and use by schools, ESUs and colleges.
- Completed and are implementing the Nebraska Technology Competencies for School Administrators. Implementation includes the marketing of the Competencies and their adoption and use by schools, ESUs and Colleges.
- Received a 1.3 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to train school superintendents and principals in leadership using technology. This project will train approximately 900 administrators over a three year period.
- Administering the implementation of the Preparing Tomorrow’s Teachers to Use Technology Grant Catalyst Project. This provides assistance to all 17 teacher preparation institutions in Nebraska and helps provide some assurance that new teachers will be able to use technology effectively in the teaching and learning environment. (\$2,000,000)
- Work with NE Distance Learning Directors to provide effective training for distance learning classroom teachers.
- Work cooperatively with the ESU staff developers and technology consultants in setting in place technology related training for the effective use of technology in the classroom.
- Work with Curriculum consultants on technology integration initiatives supporting the implementation of the Student Essential Learnings in Technology and L.E.A.R.N.S.

- On-line courses are being developed for teacher self-improvement in a cooperative effort among the ESUs, schools, NDE and higher education.

Educational Technology Related Resources for Teachers:

- Established the Nebraska Essential Learning in Technology for Students based on the International Standards for Technology in Education (ISTE). Work continues to infuse these standards in all schools in Nebraska.
- Promote and supply four educational software preview centers across Nebraska. These centers are visited by teachers within the four regions (Milford, Lincoln, Ogallala, Scottsbluff). Work is proceeding to provide preview capability on line.
- Work with the ESU Internet Curriculum Committee to update the Slate Project so all Internet curriculum resources align with the state standards.
- Acquire and schedule instructional television programming for schools for satellite broadcasting.
- Help establish a pilot project to provide alternative means of delivery of video programs to schools.
- Lobbied distributors for closed captioning of video programming and improved retention rights by schools.
- Provided electronic access to schedules and in-service materials that had previously been available on paper.
- Continue to make progress to digitize classroom video resources and to purchase the copyrights to programming.
- Initiated the process of collaborating with the NDE Accreditation Section to begin incorporating school technology plans into the School Improvement Process.
- Worked with the Curriculum and Instruction Team in locating and developing resources that will assist educators in finding materials correlated to standards and essential learnings.
- Worked with Curriculum and Instruction Team in the infusion of technology into teaching and curriculum that is aligned with the standards and essential learnings.

Evaluation and Assessment of Technology in Nebraska Schools:

- Biennial contract with the University of Nebraska in Omaha to conduct a study (Snapshot Survey) to sense the extent of teacher and student use of technology in the classroom. The study also provides a sense of the effectiveness of using technology in learning.

- A variety of assessments for evaluating technology competencies in teaching for pre-service students, faculty of higher education, and K-12 teachers has been developed and is being used in several higher education institutions across the state.
- In collaboration with Nebraska Educational Telecommunications contracted for a study to ascertain the efficacy of various methods of video delivery.
- Required all schools to update their technology infrastructure inventory that is part of their comprehensive technology plan. This provided a new database as to the extent of computers and other technology related equipment in Nebraska schools.
- Updated the count of Internet connections and local area wiring data for K-12 schools as reported through the application and fiscal disbursement process associated with the School Technology Fund (Rule 88).
- Conducted and filed the required assessments associated with the Technology Literacy Challenge Grant Funds. Information and data was collected relative to the number of computers purchased with TLCHF funds and the type of staff development activities that were done through the use of these monies.

Proposed Strategic Plan For Technology Infusion

In April, 2002 Nebraska completed a new State School Improvement/Technology Plan. Participants in the development of this Plan included representatives from LEAs (teachers and administrators), regional service agencies, higher education, state school board association, state teachers association, state council of school administrators, private sector and the Nebraska Department of Education.

The Plan fully accommodates the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan submitted for the ESEA Legislation and guidance. The State Plan will be used as a base for the development of the LEA's school improvement/ technology plans that will be required to be eligible for ESEA, Universal Services (E-Rate) and state funded grants.

MISSION STATEMENT: To facilitate and enhance learning and manage data and information through the use of technology for school improvement and increased student performance.

Goal 1: Establish and implement a technology based data and information system that correlates with, facilitates and enhances Nebraska School Improvement and increased student performance.

Background: This system will replace the educational technology plan which will be incorporated into the Nebraska School Improvement Plan that is now required of Nebraska school districts to be eligible for technology related grants and funds. The completed model will continue to be submitted electronically.

This model and the data and information it provides, when used by schools, will provide the basis for identifying the student performance level within schools in all disciplines based on the goals set by each local school district or learning centers.

Objective 1.1. Design a technology based data and information system that correlates, facilitates and enhances the Nebraska School Improvement Model.

Strategy 1. Collaborate with NDE Teams, educational service units and schools personnel and federal programs directors to refine the Framework for School Improvement Guide and the North Central Association Accreditation model to develop a Nebraska School Improvement Guide that has the capability of electronic facilitation. The intended outcome is to create one school improvement guide applicable to Nebraska schools

Activities:

1. Include and maintain the database for school district technology plans.
2. Investigate existing national and statewide plans and/or resources.
3. Identify and meet with key stakeholders to create one school improvement guide.
4. Prepare a timeline and implementation plan in collaboration with stakeholders.
5. Insure that the Guide database content includes indicators for measuring achievement in all curricular areas including the Nebraska Student Technology Essential Learnings.
6. The Guide database will include existing (school report card profiles and assessment reports) and other elements needed to identify and access schools as to student performance challenges

Strategy 2. Evaluate and/or design the electronic management software needed to facilitate the newly adopted Nebraska School Improvement Guide.

Activities:

1. Merge within this management software the "Report Card" data and information and processes currently developed in cooperation with Quiliogy.
2. Investigate existing models for relevance to this strategy (Majowski developed Model)
3. Determine if contract or internal software design is the better approach.
4. Identify our role in data collection.

Strategy 3. Use an electronic data management system to bridge the gap between collection, aggregation, and reporting for school improvement and increased student achievement.

Activities:

1. Determine if contract or internal software design is better approach.
2. Collaboratively identify intervention strategies for improving instruction and other techniques to increase student learning.

Strategy 4. Utilize the electronically managed Nebraska School Improvement Model to identify student performance challenges in all curricular areas and assist schools experiencing student performance challenges.

Activities:

1. Utilize the products of the learning community forums to assist in the development of a plan to identify and assist schools experiencing student performance challenges for all students and curricular offerings.
2. Continue the collaboration work started by ESU staff development and technology consultants, NDE staff and schools staff in identifying the relationship between schools with identified student performance challenges and state of the art intervention strategies.
3. Identify the criteria that contribute to performance challenges identified by each school.

Strategy 5. Provide for submitting plans electronically that will accommodate the local school district technology plan requirement to qualify for federal funds.

Activities:

1. Synchronize the school improvement and technology plan reporting timelines.
2. Design a user-friendly system for creating and submitting plans electronically.

Objective 1.2. Implement the newly develop electronically managed Nebraska School Improvement Guide in Nebraska Schools.

Background: This newly developed system and model, with its electronically managed capabilities, will more efficiently facilitate the accreditation process for local districts and learning centers and for the Nebraska Department of Education

Implementation activities will be accomplished through the collaborative efforts among NDE, ESUs and local schools.

Strategy 1. Provide the infrastructures, hardware and software to all schools and NDE staffs so no barriers exist in the implementation of the new model and processes.

Activities

1. Ensure that schools have the adequate resources necessary for the acquisition of hardware, software and infrastructure.

Strategy 2. Establish a statewide training program for all school staffs to insure the implementation of the new model and processes.

Activities:

1. Organize and conduct a broadcast In-service training from the NDE lab to kick off the training initiative.
2. Continue with the Teacher Webpage Project Initiative
3. Collaborate with ESU staff developers and technology coordinators to develop an on-line course to be delivered via the NWSDAC

Strategy 3. Work with the Nebraska teacher preparation institutions to ensure the new model/ system and technology are infused in the administrator and teacher preparation programs.

Activities:

1. Present in-service training at teacher training institutions
2. Establish a help-line or FAQ website.
3. Provide information to the teacher preparation institutions regarding the technology based system

Goal 2: Facilitate and enhance teaching and student learning with the use of technology and align it with the Nebraska School Improvement Plan

Objective 2.1 Provide the infrastructures, hardware and software to all schools so no barrier exists in the facilitation and enhancement of teaching and learning for all Nebraska students.

Background: Nebraska has advanced rapidly in the implementation of a technology infrastructure for PK-12 education. Even though this work is well underway and in many ways ahead of other states, a few initiatives remain to reach our goals. Completion of the installation and connection of distance education classrooms in every high school is yet to be achieved. The establishment of a statewide technology fiber conduit or "backbone", called NetCom remains to be completed. When completed, NetCom will provide the needed capacity for full Internet use and statewide distance learning capability. A few isolated learning centers are still without the means or capability to connect to the Internet and some also must complete their local area networks and connect all their classrooms. Some schools have not been able to place at least one computer in every classroom.

Strategy 1. Identify school technology infrastructure, hardware and software needs as they relate to school improvement and increased student performance.

Activities:

1. Use the technology plan to determine inventory
2. Survey and provide data on the classroom use of technology.

Strategy 2. School districts develop and submit for certification a technology plan as required for federal grant funds and line cost reductions.

Activities:

1. Infuse the required school district technology plan into the Nebraska School Improvement Model
2. Build the capacity to obtain a technology infrastructure inventory into the School Improvement/ Technology Plan Model.
3. Design the model for on-line development and delivery.
4. Collaborate with ESUs and school districts in the development, completion and submittal of the Plan.

Strategy 3. Continue to participate in, comply with, provide resources to, distribute resources associated with and work within the federal and state legislation, regulations and guidelines for educational, state government and community information technology infrastructure.

Background: Legislation and regulations related to educational information technology have been in place for some time. The intent of these policies is to provide guidelines for funding and to contribute to efficiencies that result in the economies of scale. The efficiencies also result from the avoidance of or elimination of duplicative infrastructures.

Activities:

1. Develop and present to the State Board of Education a required State Technology Plan. The Plan is a requirement for federal technology funds.
2. The Plan development is coordinated by the Educational Technology Consortium, an advisory group to the State Board of Education.
3. Provide representation on the Nebraska Information Technology Commission, Education Council and adhere to their policies for infrastructure implementation and funding.
4. Provide consulting services to schools and advocate the use of the Universal Services Fund- E-Rate program.
5. Carry out the provisions of the School Technology Fund established in Nebraska law.
6. Carry out the provisions of the Distance Learning Classroom Fund established in Nebraska Law.
7. Comply with the regulatory requirements specified in the ESEA legislation for eligibility for all technology funds from all the grant programs for Nebraska and Nebraska schools.

Objective 2.2 Provide for the delivery of and access to educational resources and instruction that will enhance and facilitate student learning for all schools and students.

Strategy 1. Provide the vehicle to insure that all resources and curriculum are aligned with Nebraska standards and essential learnings.

Activities:

1. Promote the use of existing software to align curriculum to standards and essential learnings.

2. Utilizing technology, assist with the alignment of all resources delivered to schools by the Nebraska Department of Education and other sources to Nebraska curriculum standards and essential learnings.

Strategy 2. Promote the infusion of Technology Essential Learnings for all Students in all Nebraska school curriculums.

Activities:

1. Promote the use of student assessment to determine the level of achievement of the Nebraska Technology Essential Learnings.
2. Develop and promote the use of a rubric to identify where and how the Technology Essential Learnings are infused in all schools PK-12 curriculum.
3. Promote the infusion and use of the Nebraska Student Technology Essential Learnings into the teacher preparation programs in Nebraska.

Strategy 3. Establish an on line, on-demand classroom instructional resource portal accessible to all teachers.

Activities:

1. Software preview capability
2. Near on-demand classroom Instructional Resources
3. Provide classroom resources in coordination with the NETC, via a 24 hour digital channel

Objective 2.3 Develop, identify and provide access to staff development via technology to improve teaching that will enhance student performance.

Strategy 1. Promote the use of technology in the training of all inservice and preservice staff development initiatives.

Activities:

1. Infuse the Nebraska Teacher Technology Competencies in teacher inservice and preservice programs and the assessment of competency achievement.
2. Develop a technology competency certification for graduating and inservice teachers.

Strategy 2. Promote the infusion of Nebraska Administrator Technology Competencies in the training of all inservice and preservice staff development activities.

Activities:

1. Promote the infusion of competencies in administrator preservice programs and an assessment of competency achievement.
2. Develop an assessment of competency achievement.
3. Development a technology competency certification for graduating and inservice school administrators.

Goal 3. Evidence will be provided that shows increases in student achievement and school improvement through the use of technology.

Background: Nebraska has put in place a set of technology competencies and indicators designed to help insure that all graduating students will have the ability to perform effectively in our society. Also, the International Society for Technology in Education is currently studying how the use of technology affects student learning. This could be another resource. The "Scientific Based Research" requirement that is part of the ESEA Legislation may also bring forth other studies that will be of assistance in this regard.

Objective 3.1 Measures will be developed that show that technology was used effectively in the implementation of the management of data and information for the improvement of schools and in increased student achievement.

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| Strategy 1. | Extensive research will be conducted to determine the status of existing initiatives and processes that demonstrate the effective use of technology in the implementation of the management of data and information for the improvement of schools and in increased student achievement. |
| Objective 3.2 | Measures will be developed that provide evidence of achievement and accomplishment in the Nebraska Technology Student Essential Learnings. |
| Strategy 1. | Extensive research will be conducted to determine the status of exiting initiatives and processes that successfully demonstrated evidence of achievement and accomplishment in the Nebraska Technology Student Essential Learnings. |
| Strategy 2. | Establish a student assessment measure that conforms to the specified grade level essential learnings time line. |

Parent/Family Literacy and Involvement Theme

The State has designated Family/Parent Literacy and Involvement as a theme that is inherent in meeting each goal and activity of the Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement. Parent/family literacy and involvement extends throughout the activities of the Department. Most federal programs have specific requirements for involving parents in the education of their children and in the program.

State level parent/family literacy and involvement activities, in addition to those already cited, include:

- Addressing the identified need to work with parents, communities, including business and industry, to become more informed and involved in understanding standards, assessment and accountability.
- Incorporating the theme of Family/Parent Literacy and Involvement in the District Comprehensive Plans for School Improvement to increase awareness and support efforts at the local level.
- Providing information through the media on parent involvement.
- Promoting and supporting the Family/Parent Literacy and Involvement through all programs including:
 - Early Childhood
 - Even Start Family Literacy Programs
 - Provide subgrants to nine Even Start grantees across Nebraska that provide a comprehensive family literacy service to young children and their families that also supports and fosters community collaboration among early care and education entities, schools, community-based organizations.
 - Head Start-State Collaboration Office activities

- Support and facilitate partnerships among Head Start and state systems in an effort to build a more comprehensive early childhood system based on federal Head Start Bureau priorities for Collaboration Offices (e.g. Education, Professional Development, Partnerships with Schools and Child Care, Health, Children with Disabilities, Family Literacy, Homeless Children, Welfare Reform, Community Service).
 - Encouraging Head Start partnerships with child care providers, school districts and other community-based programs to maximize funding and support transition to school.
 - Supporting parent involvement activities through coordinating parent focus groups and planning for ongoing regional and local parent networking sessions.
- The State's Parent Assistance Center (S.P.R.I.N.G) has been co-sponsored by the Early Childhood Training Center of the Department of Education.
- Title I, Part A
 - Title I, Part A requires local policies on involving parents, parent compacts for shared responsibilities for student performance. Nebraska's Title I Parent Involvement Conference has been offered opportunities for parents to learn about ways to help their children. This annual conference has been provided for more than 20 years and, on average, is attended by more than 300 parents each year.
 - The parent involvement requirements of Title I, Part A have been added to Nebraska's Comprehensive School Reform requirements to align CSR with schoolwide project requirements.

Community Involvement

As part of the efforts involved with State Goal 4: All schools and NDE will be learning organizations, the State Board of Education and the Department are annually conducting a series of Public Policy Forums across the state. These forums include broad representation of organizations, schools and community members with a focus on improving schools. The structured format of focus discussion groups allows input on a broad range of issues and topics around schools and schooling in the State. The responses are collected, analyzed and used to gain an understanding of the public's response to current practices and provide direction for future activities through identifying areas of need and support. Some of the results of the initial year's Public Policy Forums included:

- Strong support for the STARS assessment system and the capacity building professional development being provided in support of classroom-based performance assessment. The process has created invaluable "conversations" about learning and instruction as well as assessments.

- The need to use the data on student performance on the assessments to change instruction and curriculum, school practices and policies and organization.
- Students need to be connected and understand new process and benefits.
- A statewide data collection system for preschool through postsecondary (P-16) is needed.
- Parents and community members are supportive of their schools but need to be even more involved and informed. Higher Education needs to become more involved.
- A need for additional resources, including more time and money and more training opportunities for teachers and administrators.

Section 2. Consolidated Federal Application

Part I. Required State Goals With Indicators

The State of Nebraska has adopted four overarching goals as the basis of our efforts and activities to help all schools be high-performing. Within these overarching goals, the state has adopted the goals of No Child Left Behind. It incorporates the goals and performance indicators for the State under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (I. D.E.A.), and the core indicators of Career and Technical Education (Perkins). During the 2002-03 school year, the State will work to integrate more fully the goals and indicators of the various programs under the State goals. As required, the State agrees to submit performance targets for the goals and baseline data for the performance indicators related to AYP by May, 2003 and those not related to AYP by September, 2003.

State Goal 1. All students will perform to a high level of achievement.

NCLB Goal

By 2013-2014, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics.

Indicators:

The percentage of students, in the aggregate and for each subgroup, who are at or above the proficient level in reading/language arts on the State's assessment system.

The percentage of students, in the aggregate and in each subgroup, who are at or above the proficient level in mathematics on the State's assessment system.

The percentage of Title I schools that make adequate yearly progress in reading and mathematics.

I.D.E.A. Goal

All students with disabilities will participate in the assessment of state and local standards. Students with disabilities will meet the same standards as students without disabilities.

Indicators:

Number of children participating in the assessment

Results of students meeting standards (aggregated and disaggregated students with disabilities)

Perkins Core Indicator

Student attainment of academic and technical skill proficiencies.

Ensure that members of special populations will be provided with equal access to activities.

Individuals who are members of special populations will not be discriminated against on the basis of their status as members of special populations.

Programs are designed to enable the special populations to meet or exceed State adjusted levels of performance, and will prepare special populations with further training for high skill, high wage careers.

I.D.E.A. Goal

The rate of incidence for students with disabilities will be proportional across race and ethnicity categories (draft – subject to revision).

Indicator

The data that the percentage of students with disabilities is spread proportionately across race and ethnicity categories. (draft)

NCLB Goal

All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.

Indicators

The percentage of children identified as limited English proficient students, determined by cohort, who have attained English proficiency by the end of the school year.

The percentage of limited English proficient students who are at or above the proficient level in reading/language arts on the State's assessments, as reported for performance indicator 1.1.

The percentage of limited English proficient students who are at or above the proficient level in mathematics on the State's assessments, as reported for performance indicator 1.1.

NCLB Goal

All students will graduate from high school.

Indicators

The percentage of students who graduate from high school each year with a diploma,

- disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged
- calculated in the same manner as used in National Center for Education Statistics reports on Common Core of Data.

The percentage of students who drop out of school,

- disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged

- calculated in the same manner as used in National Center for Education Statistics reports on Common Core of Data.

The number of individuals completing the General Equivalency Diploma (GED).

I.D.E.A. Goal

The drop-out rate for students with disabilities will be the same or less than the drop-out rate for students without disabilities.

Indicator

The data shows that the drop-out rate for students with disabilities is decreasing annually to approximate the drop-out rate for students without disabilities.

The graduation rate for students with disabilities will be the same or greater than the graduation rate for students without disabilities.

Perkins Core Indicators

Student attainment of a high school diploma, equivalent or postsecondary degree or credential.

Placement in, retention in and completion of postsecondary education or advanced training, military service or employment.

Participation/completion of programs leading to nontraditional training and employment.

State Goal 2. All students will be taught by quality staff.

NCLB

By 2005-06, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.

Indicators

The percentage of classes being taught by “highly qualified” teachers (as the term is defined in section 9101(23) of the ESEA), in the aggregate and in “high-poverty” schools (as defined in section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA).

The percentage of teachers receiving high-quality professional development.
The percentage of paraprofessionals who are qualified.

State Goal 3. All students will learn in a safe, supportive learning environment.

NCLB

All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.

Indicators

The number of persistently dangerous schools as defined by the State.

The State is currently developing a policy and definition related to persistently dangerous schools as required by No Child Left Behind. Our proposed timeline for completion of this policy and definition is January of 2003. This should allow for baseline data to be submitted by the September 2003 deadline.

State Goal 4. All schools and NDE will be learning organizations.

The process of becoming a learning organization requires the involvement of all personnel in a dialogue about the focus of the organization and the strategies and activities (the real work) to be conducted to define its goals and reach them. A learning organization is one that reflects on the processes being used and uses the information gained from this analysis to adjust work and responsibilities.

In schools, the “real work” is assuring that all students, including those with special needs, perform to a high level of achievement. This requires the school to analyze:

- all curriculum (PreK-12) to ensure that essential skills and knowledge are included;
- assessment systems that address skills and knowledge in the context of the classroom to ensure that assessment is used for learning;
- practices and policies to ensure that no students are being left behind;
- instructional approaches and strategies to ensure that they have been proven to be effective and are research based;
- organizational structure and management to ensure that appropriate resources are allocated and utilized to meet goals;
- professional development to ensure that it is focused on goals, cohesive in nature, and ongoing, and individualized to meet the needs of teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals.

In the Department of Education, the “real work” is assisting all schools to be high-performing. This involves:

- collaboration among teams to coordinate resources and expertise to assist schools;
- developing cross-team groups to assist districts in developing and implementing the District Comprehensive Plans for School Improvement;
- collaborating with partners – ESUs and Higher Education, to provide expanded service to districts, schools and communities;
- coordinating and consolidating federal program resources to provide statewide initiatives focused on improving student performance and increasing teacher and administrator capacity;

- sharing the experience and expertise of staff to increase our capacity to work with and serve others; and
- collaborating with agency partners (Federal and State, Health and Human Services and others) to assure that children of all ages receive the support needed to reach their potential.

Part II. State Activities to Implement ESEA Programs

1. Describe the State's system of standards, assessments and accountability and provide evidence that it meets the requirements of the ESEA. In doing so –

a) Provide a timeline of major milestones, for either:

- a. Adopting challenging content standards in reading/language arts and mathematics at each grade level for grades 3 through 8, consistent with section 1111(b)(1)**

Nebraska's goal "All students will perform to a high level of achievement" includes all students in all subject areas at all grade levels. The goal of Nebraska's School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System is to improve student learning by enhancing the capacity of every teacher to conduct appropriate assessment for student learning and implement instructional approaches and strategies to ensure that all students perform to high levels of achievement in all subject areas and at all grade levels. To accomplish this goal, all teachers and administrators must become assessment literate. In an ideal implementation of STARS, the reporting of progress at specific grade levels (i.e., 4, 8 and 11) is merely an external confirmation of appropriate instruction and assessment throughout the school system.

Since the initiation of the STARS Assessment system, many school districts have:

- Articulated the standards in reading/language arts and mathematics across all grade levels (K-12) by defining the expectations of what all students must know and be able to do at each grade level in order to demonstrate mastery on the established content standards in these subject areas in grades 4, 8, and 11.
- Developed a district assessment system that includes procedures and processes for assessing these expectations at all grade levels. These districts used the Quality Indicators for developing all their assessments.
- Established academic achievement standards for determining performance levels on the assessments at all grade levels.
- Aligned curriculum and instruction across grade levels and subject areas to ensure the expectations are being taught.
- Developed report cards to report progress to parents based on the expectations for each grade level.

In Nebraska's STARS system of classroom-based assessments, defining what students should know and be able to do and designing the assessment of those skills and knowledge is a

complimentary process. As noted in the timeline, districts will have both defined expectations and developed appropriate assessments for grades 3 through 8 and 11 within the time frame required in P. L. 107-110. Our formative plans for reaching this goal are:

- October 2, 2002 – As part of the District Comprehensive Plans for School Improvement, districts will provide a description of the processes being used and the progress being made in articulating expectations of what students must know and be able to do, at a minimum, in grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 in order to demonstrate proficiency in the reading/language arts and mathematics content standards at grades 4 and 8. Many districts have already articulated standards across all grade levels and are developing classroom-based assessments to measure student performance. The guidance for the District Comprehensive Plans will address the need for all districts to have articulated standards in reading/language arts and mathematics across these grade levels, at a minimum, by May of 2003.
- By November 1, 2002, the Nebraska Department of Education will determine the extent to which districts have developed expectations at grades 3, 5, 6, and 7.
- Districts that have not completed the definition of expectations and assessments will be provided technical assistance from the ESUs and the Department. Financial assistance will be available through the STAR grants using funds available through Section 6113.
- Prior to May 1, 2003, all districts will report having articulated the standards and defined expectations of what students must know and be able to do to at grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 (at a minimum) in order to demonstrate proficiency on reading/language arts and mathematics content standards in grades 4 and 8.
- Districts submit assessment plans that identify how each standard in grades 4, 8, and 11 will be assessed and the assessment procedures to be used to measure the content standards by September 30 of each year. The assessment plans are reviewed by the Nebraska Department of Education, and feedback about their plans for assessment is provided to the districts. This plan will need to be modified to incorporate assessments for grades 3, 5, 6, and 7.

b) Provide a timeline for major milestones, for adopting challenging academic standards in science that meet the requirements of section 1111(b)(1).

The State Board of Education adopted challenging academic standards in science that meet the requirements of section 1111(b)(1) in June 2002. Evidence of standards in science will be provided in fall of 2002 or when the Department issues final regulations and guidance.

c) Provide a timeline of major milestones for the development and implementation, in consultation with LEAs, of assessments that meet the requirements of section 1111(b)(3) in the required subjects and grade levels.

The proposed timeline for the development and implementation of assessments for section 1111 under STARS is provided below. As described in greater depth in STARS Assessment System in Section 1 of this plan, STARS' locally developed classroom-based assessments

must be phased in over time to allow time for teachers to develop and implement quality performance assessments. Nebraska's timeline for STARS allows an initial year of developing performance assessments in one subject area followed by a year to refine the assessments relative to the feedback from the external expert review of the Quality Indicators in the Assessment Portfolio, refine the academic achievement levels, and incorporate changes in curriculum and instructional strategies before the assessments are considered fully implemented.

Under the proposed timeline and activities below, the Assessment Portfolios with the Quality Indicators for STARS assessments in grades 3-8 and 11 (2004-05) would apply the same review process (described in response to the next question) to the entire district's assessment system (process and practices) for all grade levels including sample assessments across grades 3-8.

Proposed Timeline and Activities to meet section 1111 of No Child Left Behind:

2000-01

- Initial (pilot) year for Reading assessments: Grades 4, 8, and 11
- Initial (pilot) year for Statewide Writing Assessments: Grades 4, 8, and 11
- Norm-referenced assessments required in one grade at each level 3-5, 6-9, 10-12
- Districts submit Assessment Portfolio on reading assessments for external expert review and rating

2001-02

- Initial year for Math assessments: Grades 4, 8, and 11
 - Refine academic achievement standards and quality indicators for Reading assessments
- Statewide Writing Assessment: Grade 4
- Norm-referenced assessments required in one grade at each level 3-5, 6-9, 10-12
- Districts submit Assessment Portfolio on mathematics assessments for external expert review and rating

2002-03

- Reading Assessment: Grades 4, 8, and 11
 - Refine academic achievement standards and quality indicators for math assessments
 - District establish local goals for subgroup performance in Reading using assessment results as baseline data
- Statewide Writing Assessment: Grade 8
- Norm-referenced assessments required in one grade at each level 3-5, 6-9, 10-12
- Districts submit Assessment Portfolio on reading assessments for external expert review and rating

2003-04

- Math Assessment: Grades 4, 8, and 11
 - District establish local goals for subgroup performance in Mathematics using assessment results as baseline data

- Through the years of developing local assessments for reading/language arts and mathematics in grades 4, 8 and 11, districts have developed assessment systems that will have been piloted one year and reviewed by external assessment experts, implemented in the next year and then reviewed again by the experts. This process will ensure that every district has defined an assessment system with technical quality for classroom-based assessment of standards that can be used at all grade levels and subject areas.
- Statewide Writing Assessment in Grade 11
- Norm-referenced assessments required in one grade at each level 3-5, 6-9, 10-12
- Districts submit Assessment Portfolio on mathematics assessments for external expert review and rating

2004-05

- Initial Reading and Math assessment of expectations and standards in Grades 3-8 and 11
 - Pilot reporting of reading and mathematics assessments in grades 3-8 and 11
- Statewide Writing Assessment in Grades 4, 8, 11
- Initial Science Assessments Grades 8 and 11, pilot in Elem.
- Norm-referenced assessments required in one grade at each level 3-5, 6-9, 10-12
- Districts submit Assessment Portfolio for the district's assessment system including sample assessments from grades 3-8 in reading and math and science assessments in grades 8, 11 and the elementary grade (to be determined)

2005-06

- Reading and Math Assessments in Grades 3-8 and 11
- Science Assessments in Grades 4, 8, and 11
- Initial Social Studies/History Assessments in Grades 8 and 11, pilot in Elem.
- Statewide Writing Assessment in Grade 4
- Norm-referenced assessments required in one grade at each level 3-5, 6-9, 10-12
- Districts submit Assessment Portfolio for social studies/history assessments

2006-07

- Science Assessments in Grades 4, 8, and 11
- Reading and Math Assessments in Grades 3 - 8, and 11
- Statewide Writing Assessment in Grade 8
- Norm-referenced assessments required in one grade at each level 3-5, 6-9, 10-12

d) Provide a timeline of major milestones for setting, in consultation with LEAs, academic achievement standards in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science that meet the requirements of section 1111(b)(1).

See above timeline. Academic achievement standards are developed in conjunction with the development and implementation of classroom-based performance assessments. Evidence

will be submitted by December 2006. Academic achievement standards are reviewed and rated as an integral component of the District Assessment Portfolio. Included in the portfolio is a sample of the actual assessment instruments used.

The portfolios are reviewed and evaluated in order to determine whether or not they meet the Six Quality Assessment Criteria that have been established by the Nebraska Department of Education with the assistance of the Buros Center for Testing. The Six Quality Assessment Criteria are listed and described below. The assessments used in each Nebraska school district must:

1. Match and measure the standards. Districts must determine that the assessment used measures the standards and that students have sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their ability to meet the standard.
2. Provide opportunity for students to have learned the content. Districts must have examined their own local curriculum to determine that the opportunity to meet the standards exists within the local district's curriculum and that instruction on the standards occurs at an appropriate time in relationship to assessment.
3. Be free of bias. Districts must examine the assessment to be sure that any of the items or tasks are free of bias and are not insensitive to any group or circumstance.
4. Be written at the appropriate level. Districts must examine the assessment items or tasks in order to determine that the expectations are appropriate for the assessed grade level.
5. Be reliable and consistently scored. Districts must document that they can have confidence in the results of the assessment, that assessment results have produced an appropriate level of reliability, .70 or higher.
6. Have appropriate mastery levels. Districts must describe the systematic way they have determined achievement performance levels for the assessment, including both professional judgment and actual student results.

All Nebraska school districts submit District Assessment Portfolios of assessment practices and procedures for each grade level being assessed. Included in the portfolios is a random sample of assessment instruments that has been assigned to the school districts. The portfolios, due at the end of June each year, are submitted to the Nebraska Department of Education.

The Nebraska Department of Education works with the Buros Center for Testing in order to review the District Assessment Portfolios and to evaluate how well each district's assessment system meets the Six Quality Assessment Criteria. The evaluation process has two levels. The first level consists of a National Advisory Panel of well-known assessment experts who give guidance to the entire portfolio review process. This group of eight individuals, four from out of the state of Nebraska and four from within Nebraska assist in the training of the portfolio reviewers, provide guidance to the assessment review process, and make the final determination of model assessment practices within the state.

The second level of evaluation is the review of the portfolios themselves. Sixteen portfolio reviewers from both within the state of Nebraska and from outside of the state are contracted to complete the portfolio examinations. These portfolio reviewers are assessment experts

who examine the district portfolios and determine the quality of the assessment processes and procedures used within each school district. The criteria for the review are the Six Quality Assessment Criteria. After a training session conducted by the Buros Center for Testing, the reviewers evaluate the portfolios each year from July 1-September 1st. School districts receive feedback on their assessment procedures as a result of the portfolio review in addition to suggestions about how their local assessment processes can be improved. This feedback along with a rating of the quality of the assessment is sent to the school districts in October of the year following the portfolio submission. Districts receive a rating for each portfolio submitted: Exemplary, Very Good, Good, Acceptable but needs improvement, or Unacceptable.

As the portfolio reviewers are examining the District Assessment Portfolios that include the assessment processes and procedures for Nebraska schools, they have also been instructed to identify potential model assessment practices. These practices that are “illustrative of model practice” are identified within all sizes and circumstances of school districts: large, medium, small, urban, and rural. The model practices identified are appropriate for replication in other school districts within the state of Nebraska.

In the fall, prior to the release of the portfolio feedback information, the National Advisory Panel convenes to review the model assessment practices that have been identified by the portfolio reviewers. The panel determines the most promising of those practices and makes the final selection, selecting four model practices for each of the Six Quality Assessment Criteria. The Nebraska Department of Education notifies the Nebraska school districts of this model assessment recognition and disseminates the model assessment information to Nebraska school districts.

- e) By January 31, 2003, describe how the State calculated its “starting point” as required for adequate yearly progress consistent with section 1111(b)(2)(E), including data elements and procedures for calculations.**
- f) By January 31, 2003, provide the State’s definition of adequate yearly progress.**
 - i. Percentage of students meeting or exceeding the State’s proficient level**
 - 1. Starting point value;**
 - 2. Intermediate goals;**
 - 3. Timeline;**
 - 4. Annual objectives;**
 - ii. The definition of graduation rate**
 - iii. One other academic indicator, applicable to elementary schools and for middle schools**
 - iv. Any other optional indicators and their targets**
- g) By January 31, 2003, identify the minimum number of students that the State has determined, based on sound statistical methodology, to be sufficient to yield statistically reliable information for each purpose for which disaggregated data are used and justify this determination.**

By January 31, 2003, with the assistance of the State Plan Advisory Committee, the Committee of Practitioners and the Management Team, the State will

- develop a definition of adequate yearly progress for all schools in the state that includes:
 - STARS Reading results
 - STARS Math results
 - Subgroup performance on Reading and Mathematics
 - NRT results (required in addition to STARS)
 - Assessment Quality Ratings for Reading and Math
 - Statewide Writing Assessment results
 - Other indicators as determined by State (finalized by submission of plan for the 2003-04 school year) and included in the goals set by the district in their Comprehensive Improvement Plans.
- identify the starting points and intermediate goals for measuring progress for all schools,
- define the graduation rate,
- identify one other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools, and
- with the assistance of the Buros Center for Testing, establish the minimum number of students for disaggregation of data for subgroup performance. This is a very problematic area for Nebraska with its many small schools. Approximately 75% of the students in the state are enrolled in the 25 districts (out of 530+ districts).

h) Provide a plan for how the State will implement a single accountability system that used the same criteria, based primarily on assessments consistent with section 1111(b), for determining whether a school has made adequate yearly progress, regardless of whether the school receives Title I, Part A, or other federal funds.

To achieve a single accountability system within the State, the following changes have been or need to be made:

- LB 812, passed by the Nebraska Legislature in April of 2000, requires every school, including those not receiving Title I, Part A or other federal funds, to participate in the State's assessment system, report results of student performance on STARS and submit assessment portfolios for external expert review and rating. (Completed)
- The data collection system of the Department needs to be restructured to collect and connect all the data that will be used for determining adequate yearly progress according to NCLB for all schools in the State. Nebraska currently does not have a student level data collection system and will need to create a system to collect the multiple data requirements of NCLB. (In process)
- Reporting forms and procedures need to be modified to accommodate the additional data requirements of NCLB. (In process)

- i) Identify languages present in the student population to be assessed, the languages in which the State administers assessments, and the languages in which the State will need to administer assessments. Use the most recent data available and identify when the data were collected.**

The Nebraska state assessment system is locally developed. The assessments include norm reference tests, criterion reference assessments, or locally developed assessments. Regardless of the assessments selected, school districts must document that their assessments meet the Six Quality Assessment Criteria that have been established for the state of Nebraska.

School districts submit an annual District Assessment Portfolio of the assessment practices and procedures used for measuring students on standards. The portfolios are reviewed and evaluated by assessment experts from all over the country to determine if their practices and procedures meet the Six Quality Assessment Criteria. The Assessment Criteria were established by NDE along with the Buros Center for Testing. The assessments used in each district must:

1. Match and measure the standards
2. Provide opportunity for students to have learned the content.
3. Be free of bias.
4. Be written at the appropriate level.
5. Be reliable and consistently scored.
6. Have appropriate mastery levels.

Because the Nebraska state assessment system is locally developed and administered, the SEA does not develop assessments. Therefore, if assessments are to be developed in other languages, the district will develop them as part of their assessment system and include these assessments in their district portfolios. The assessments will be evaluated on the same basis as outlined above.

The SEA collects data on the languages present in the student population during the spring of each school year. The following information was collected in April of 2002 from the statewide limited English Proficiency survey. There are forty-three identified languages spoken by ELL students in Nebraska. The following languages are listed as home languages by 100 or more students in Nebraska schools:

- Spanish – 9,518
- Vietnamese – 579
- Arabic – 322
- Nuer – 371
- Korean 103
- Kurdish – 149
- Omaha – 281
- Serbo-Croatian/Bosnian – 153
- Ukrainian – 108

- j) Provide evidence that, beginning not later than the school year 2002-2003, LEAs will provide for an annual assessment of English proficiency that meets the requirements of section 1111(b)(7) and 3116(d)(4), including assessment of English proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and comprehension. Identify the assessment(s) the state will designate for this purpose.**

All school districts receiving funds under Title III will provide assurances to the SEA that beginning with the school year 2002-03, they will annually assess the English proficiency of ELL students in the five language domains. The LEA will report the test(s) administered and the test results to the SEA. Every district reporting ELL students will receive a Title III grant although many smaller districts will need to form consortia in order to meet the \$10,000 minimum grant requirement.

The SEA believes that school districts should have the flexibility to identify and administer language assessment tests that address the five domains of language. Some districts rely solely on tests developed by test publishers whose purpose is to assess reading, writing, speaking and listening and comprehension of ELL students. Other districts have developed language assessment tests to measure these domains that have been normed and validated by their school system. The SEA has already met with the following test publishers to begin discussions on adequate yearly progress and expected gains for English language development:

- Language Assessment Scales (LAS) – CTB-McGraw Hill
- IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT) – Ballard and Tighe
- Woodcock Munoz – Riverside
- MAC II – Maculaitis Assessment System

All of these language tests measure all five domains of English language proficiency, including speaking, listening, reading, writing, and comprehension. Districts will ultimately have the flexibility of choosing from the list of approved tests and will report that their students have met the annual expected gains as determined by the test publisher.

In identifying the adequate yearly progress for ELL children, the SEA will:

- Work with major publishers of language assessment tests to help establish the annual expected gains of ELL children on each test. (Summer 2002)
- Conduct workshops on the expected gains as identified by each of the major test publishers of language assessment tests. (Fall 2002)
- Conduct workshops on the administration and scoring of language assessment tests. (Fall 2002)

Districts receiving Title III funds will be required to:

- Annually assess their ELL students with a language assessment test that assesses the five domains of speaking, reading, writing, listening, and comprehension.
- Use assessments that are normed for ELL students and are valid and reliable.
- Use state identified test(s) to assess ELL students.

- Meet the expected gains that each of the publishers of the test(s) have identified.
 - Districts using a district developed assessment systems will submit quantifiable evidence of the annual expected gains for each of their subtests.
 - For the first reporting year, school districts will report the following:
 - The number of ELL students.
 - The measures used to assess the four domains of language.
 - The percent of ELL students meeting the annual expected gains as identified by the test publisher or as quantified by the district on locally developed tests. It is anticipated that eighty percent of districts whose ELL students have attended at least 80% of the school year will meet the annual expected gains in learning English.
- k) **Describe the status of the State's efforts to establish standards and annual measurable achievement objectives under section 3122(a) of the ESEA that relate to the development and attainment of English proficiency by limited English proficient children. These standards and objectives must relate to the development and attainment of English proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and comprehension, and be aligned with the State academic content and achievement standards as required by section 1111(b)(1) of the ESEA. If they are not yet established, describe the State's plan and timeline for completing the development of these standards and achievement objectives.**

Under the requirements of Title III, the state will establish standards for ELL students. These standards will be aligned with the state English language arts standards. The Task Force, proposed by NDE, will help guide this process. In addition, this task force will determine the annual measurable achievement objectives. This process will enable the SEA to determine how ELL students meet the English Language Arts standards, the ELL standards, and the annual measurable achievement objectives.

The SEA will:

- Establish an ELL Objectives Task Force. This Task Force will consist of representatives from the SEA, LEAs and IHEs, and consultants knowledgeable in ELL standards to establish a State plan and timeline for completing the development of annual measurable achievement objectives for ELL children.
- The annual measurable achievement objectives will also be aligned with the state English Language Arts standards.
- This plan will be completed by the last quarter of the initial project year.

Timeline:

First quarter:

- Choose SEA, LEA and IHE representatives to serve on the ELL Objectives Task Force.

- Identify a consultant that will facilitate the process and lead the SEA in the establishment of ELL achievement objectives.
- Convene the first meeting of this Task Force.
- Identify the tasks and activities needed to complete the ELL achievement objectives.

Second quarter-Third quarters:

- Complete the tasks and activities as identified by the Task Force.

Fourth quarter:

- Finalize the ELL Achievement Objectives
- Publish and distribute the ELL Achievement Objectives to all LEAs
- Conduct workshops on the implementation of the ELL Achievement Objectives

- 2. Describe the process for awarding competitive subgrants for the programs listed below. In a separate response for each of these programs, provide a description of the following items, including how the State will address the related statutory requirements: a) timelines, b) selection criteria and how they promote improved academic achievement, c) priorities and how they promote improved academic achievement.**

The consolidation of federal programs as a cross-team group within the Department, as of March 2002, will provide consistency in procedures, selection criteria and priorities for all competitive and, as appropriate, formula subgrants and contracts. An in-house procedural manual for all grants management is being developed to define consistent processes and procedures for grant applications, fiscal management, progress reports and financial reporting.

Priorities for all competitive and formula grants include:

- Support district improvement goals to increase student performance on STARS
- Use of scientific research based practices and programs
- Support and use of only “highly qualified staff”
- Use results-based professional development
- Use technology to increase student performance
- Support parents and families as partners in the education of their children
- Integrate and coordinate activities proposed with district/school improvement efforts
- Involve the broadest possible appropriate community members

The above criteria will be described, as appropriate, in the District Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement for all formula and, where applicable, continuation funding of competitive grants.

The selection priorities for all competitive grants and, as applicable, formula grants include:

- High academic need
- High poverty
- Targeted populations

All competitive grants will follow these general guidelines and NDE's Administrative Memo.

- The application materials include information on:
 - The criteria used in evaluating the quality and appropriateness of the proposal,
 - The selection process used to evaluate proposals that includes a peer review process, and
 - The rubric for rating proposals against the priorities and criteria.
- Approval by the State Board of Education for all grants if any equal or exceed \$10,000

Even Start Family Literacy (Title I, Part B)

In general, key Nebraska Even Start procedures follow closely the most current non-regulatory guidance provided by the USDE. Applications for Even Start projects are accepted in any year that sufficient funds are available to support new projects after continuing projects have been funded. The availability of the application packet is advertised in December to all school superintendents, Title 1 Directors, Head Start Directors, and leaders of other known community based organizations. Applications are due April 15. Applications are reviewed by a panel of experts (at least one early childhood professional, one adult education professional, and one person with expertise in family literacy programs) and recommendations for funding are made to the State Board of Education in June. Grant Awards are issued effective July 1 for a term of four years (with annual Continuation Applications required which demonstrate compliance with requirements and successful implementation). The newly funded grantees may utilize a portion of the first year's grant to fund start up costs.

The Request for Proposals is framed around the capacity of the applicant and the partners to successfully implement the 15 required program elements targeting at least a three-year age range; the RFP is shared with the Committee of Practitioners whenever changes are necessary. The application requires demonstration that the area to be served has a high percentage or a large number of children and families who are in need of Even Start services as indicated by high levels of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, limited English proficiency, or other need-related indicators. Applications are also reviewed to assure that the applicant partners intend to make maximum use of existing services, can provide the required non-

federal share, and can provide a program that will serve as a model to others desiring to begin family literacy programs.

Selection Criteria

Each application shall include documentation regarding the qualifications of personnel as defined in Section 1237 (b). In continuation applications and in biannual monitoring visits, a specific question is asked regarding compliance with new staff qualifications and what is done for professional development activities for all Even Start staff paid with federal funds. The applications must include a plan of operation and continuous improvement for the program that includes:

- A description of the program objectives, strategies to meet those objectives, and how those strategies and objectives are consistent with the program indicators established by the State. Applicants must identify how their program will help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy while improving educational opportunities for families that are of economic disadvantage and in need of early childhood education, adult literacy and/or basic education, and parenting education. The local and state evaluation efforts help to determine whether sub-grantees are meeting objectives consistent with those of the state's Even Start plan.
- A description of the activities and services that will be provided under the program, including a description of how the program will incorporate the program elements required by section 1235. Sub-grantees are required to recruit families most in need of comprehensive literacy services and establish enrollment process, eligibility criteria, screening and assessment for appropriate services. Sub-grants provide early childhood education for preschoolers and to assist families in securing ongoing quality child care and early learning settings when appropriate with appropriate intensity and frequency to achieve individual literacy progress. Sub-grants also provide parent-child and parenting education activities to support positive parenting practices. Adults in the family are required to identify literacy, English learning and/or educational goals to support their integration into the local community and workforce, support their child's learning needs, and when applicable, support adults in achieving economic self-sufficiency through referrals, literacy materials and resources, and connections with workforce development opportunities.
- A description of the population to be served and an estimate of the number of participants to be served. The population that sub-grantees serve varies from program to program. All Nebraska Even Start programs are located within communities that are ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse. Nebraska's population has an increasing number of English language learners. Latino families are sprinkled all across the state, with higher concentrations in central and western sectors. Populations of Asian and Sudanese, Eastern European are concentrated in the eastern sectors and Lincoln-Omaha metro areas. Four registered American Indian tribes are located within Nebraska's geographic borders.
- As appropriate, a description of the applicant's collaborative efforts with institutions of higher education, community-based organization, the State educational agency, private elementary schools, or other eligible organizations in carrying out the program for which assistance is sought. Even Start programs are administered locally

within a community context, drawing upon and sharing resources among a wide array of local service providers to support both the literacy and comprehensive needs of young children and their families. Many Even Start programs are directly linked to Head Start and have access to other public health, libraries, literacy councils, community colleges and local public and private school districts, family resource centers and child care providers to meet their comprehensive needs. Biannual visits from the SEA to the local program provide focused opportunity to dialogue about the collaborative approach and unique strategies and resourcefulness of grantees to create family-centered literacy programs.

- A statement of the methods that will be used –
 - To ensure that the programs will serve families most in need of the activities and services provided by this subpart;
 - To provide services under this subpart to individuals with special needs, such as individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities; and
 - To encourage participants to remain in the program for a time sufficient to meet the program's purpose.

Each Even Start sub-grantee is required to provide documentation in their annual continuation proposal as well as in biannual monitoring visits to determine if those families most in need of the services are in deed being served. Special consideration is given to those with limited English proficiency and supporting those families who have children and/or adults with special needs. Sub-grantees are required to develop and document appropriate program strategies that will demonstrate progress.

- A description of how the plan is integrated with other programs under this Act or other Acts, as appropriate. Even Start and Head Start partnerships are encouraged at the local level. Even Start programs work closely with Title I programs providing early childhood services.
- A description of how the plan provides for rigorous and objective evaluation of progress toward the program objectives described in subparagraph (A) and for continuing use of evaluation data for program improvement. A state level evaluation is carried out via contract with the University of Nebraska Medical Center (Munroe-Meyer Institute).

Priorities

Applications must address the following Federal and State priorities:

- Demonstration that the area to be served by the program has a high percentage or a large number of children and families who are in need of such services.
- Be located in areas designated as Federal empowerment zones or enterprise communities.
- Build on existing services on a first dollar basis, avoiding supplantation.

Timeline

Even Start Family Literacy	
Dates	Grant Activity
December 1	Grant Notification
April 15	Applications due
June	Grants awarded

Education of Migrant Children (Title I, Part C)

Also see responses to Questions 1-6 under Part III. ESEA Key Programmatic Requirements and Fiscal Information.

Priority

Needs expressed by LOAs included the following:

- 1) the development of English language proficiency in students;
- 2) teacher training in effective instructional strategies to increase the academic performance of students and,
- 3) increased performance level of students in reading through more instructional time.

These priorities will receive the greatest funding from the Migrant Education Program budget subawarded to each of the Complexes. All three priorities support literacy enhancement with reading skills development central to these efforts. Funds will be allocated to the LOA based on need and student status.

Timeline

Education of Migrant Children	
Dates	Grant Activity
Spring	Needs Assessment data collected
June	Grant notification
July 1	Applications due
August - September	Grants awarded upon approval

Prevention and Intervention for Children Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk – local Agency Programs (Title I, Part D, Subpart 2)

Priorities and Selection Process

The formula used for subgrant selection of Title I, Part D, Subpart 2 funds was developed by the Committee of Practitioners as it existed under the 1994 reauthorization of ESEA. That Committee defined agencies eligible for services under this Part as the county operated

detention centers. Nebraska has 2 small rural centers and 3 located in urban areas. The formula (10% of the caseload count) for eligibility ensures a grant to the districts serving the highest number and percentage of eligible youth. The Committee also determined that, although there are youth who would be eligible under the definition of “delinquent” outside of the county operated detention centers, these youth would receive services through the set asides for neglected youth in residential settings under Title I, Part A. The annual budget for funds under Title I, Part D, Subpart 2 is consolidated within the Title I, Part A application. Title I, Part D, Subpart 2 will be included in the District Comprehensive Plans for School Improvement and shall contain:

- A description of the program and plan of services to be carried out to increase the academic achievement of all students, including the accrual of credits toward graduation or a general equivalency diploma, if appropriate;
- Evidence of a signed formal agreement between the applicant agency and the local institution;
- The name of the designated school liaison who will:
 - Be responsible for issues relating to transition of children and youth from an institution;
 - Work with school districts regarding children and youth with disabilities in order to meet existing IEPs and identification of students with possible disabilities;
 - Ensure student assessment and appropriate academic records are shared; and
 - Work with the district of residence to ensure appropriate credit is awarded for satisfactory completion of high school courses.

Timeline

Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk	
Dates	Grant Activity
November 1	Caseload Counts
April – May	Grant notification
July 1	Annual Application due
October 1	District Comprehensive Plan Due

Comprehensive School Reform (Title I, Part F)

The purpose of CSR is to provide annual competitive grants to local schools to develop and implement whole-school comprehensive reforms, based upon scientific based research and effective practices that help ensure all children will perform to a high level of achievement on standards and assessments.

Selection Process

Only applications that propose to use CSR funds to integrate and coordinate improvement efforts in a truly comprehensive (covering student, teacher, and organizational learning) model will be considered complete. An initial review by NDE staff will determine if proposals contain the required components and are complete. An external expert panel will

review and rate the responses to questions in Parts II and IV of all complete applications using the rubric provided with the application. In addition, the reviewers will rate the overall comprehensiveness of the proposal. A proposal must have a rating of at least 70% of the total available points on the comprehensiveness rubric.

Applications that receive at least 70% of the available points by the expert review panel will be recommended for funding. These schools will have a site visit, a team visit, or a videoconference to verify the information provided in the application, review with school staff the process used to select a model that matches identified needs and determine the effectiveness of the model, discuss the comprehensiveness of the reform proposal and review how the school plans to sustain the program after three years of CSR funding. This site visit will also be used to determine the kinds of technical assistance and support needed by the project, if funded. If the visit fails to verify the information provided in the proposal, or to demonstrate an understanding of the reform design, the recommendation to fund will be withdrawn.

Priorities

The competitive priorities established to ensure grants are awarded to schools in need provide additional points for:

- Proposals that have a concentrated focus on supporting the academic achievement of children for whom English is a Second Language or who are Native American. (10 points)
- Schools that have a high percentage (35% or more) of minority or high-risk students (10 points)
- Schools with a percentage of poverty equal to or greater than 40%. (10 points)
- Schools identified to be in need of improvement under section 1116 of ESEA.

Timeline

Comprehensive School Reform	
Dates	Grant Activity
September	Conduct statewide information meetings
February	Grant writing workshop
March	Applications due
March	Peer review panel and site visit
June	Award Grants
June	Progress reports for projects

Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund – subgrants to eligible partnerships (Title II, Part A, Subpart 3)

Priorities

The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education invites eligible applicants to submit any proposals consistent with the purpose of the program and the federal statutes. Proposals may address the needs of in-service teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals. Each year the Commission establishes priorities based on identified state needs. Although any proposal is considered, those that meet one or more of the priorities are given additional weight in the evaluation process. Priorities are identified in the RFP. While priorities may change from year to year, the Commission has a continuing interest in the following priorities:

- Meeting the needs of in-service teachers and paraprofessionals by addressing one or more of the following:
 - Increased content knowledge
 - Enhanced skills in utilizing instructional technology; or
 - Direct alignment of curricula with K-12 standards.
- Meeting the special needs of first and second year teachers, including mentoring and other support systems.

Key Procedures

The Commission issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) every year in late spring. A notification of the release of the RFP is mailed to every institution of higher education in the state and to every high need local educational agency, as well as to other interested individuals.

The Commission uses the review criteria identified in the RFP to evaluate the proposals. The criteria are assigned point values. Any proposal that does not meet federal requirements is disqualified.

The Commission convenes an independent evaluation panel to review the proposals and rank them in order of merit. Panelists are free of any direct involvement in any proposal. The panel may include K-12 teachers or administrators, college or university faculty, staff of the Nebraska Department of Education, representatives of the private sector, and those conversant on work force demands and the needs of the employer community.

The recommendations of the panel may be contingent upon the acceptance by the project director of certain changes in the project or budget. The recommendations of the panel are submitted to the Commission by the Commission staff. Grant awards are made by the Commission. All applicants are notified in writing of the decisions of the Commission. Non-funded applicants may request information from the Commission staff regarding the concerns of the evaluation.

Selection Criteria

Eligible Partnership – federal regulations for this program require that funds be awarded only to partnerships that consist of:

- An institution of higher education and the division of the institution that prepares teachers and principals;

- A school of arts and sciences, and
- A high-need local educational agency.

Each proposal must include a copy of the partnership agreement signed by the appropriate representative from each partner entity. The agreement will identify the role of each partner and the amount of funds that each partner will receive. No single partner can receive more than 50% of the total grant amount.

Criteria assigned points and evaluated by the review panel:

- Demonstrated need
- Plan of action, including objectives, project activities, timetable, plan for recruitment and selection of participants, dissemination of results
- Applicant's commitment and capacity
- Budget and cost effectiveness
- Long-term impact
- Evaluation plan
- Other considerations, including but not limited to, the number of institutions which receive awards, the geographic distribution of the projects or teachers served, the degree to which the proposal demonstrates ideas that are innovative and creative, and other appropriate considerations.

Timeline

Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund	
Dates	Grant Activity
April - May	Requests for proposals
October - November	Due date for applications
November - December	Peer review
February - March	Grants awarded by Commission

Enhanced Education Through Technology (Title II, Part D)

Process for Application for EETT Competitive Grants

The Request for Proposals for the EETT competitive grants in Nebraska will be developed by the staff of the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Educational Technology Center (ETC) during the month of July, 2002 and will be available for publication by August 1, 2002. The RFP will be mailed to the Administrator of each school district in Nebraska as well as to the regional service agencies (Educational Service Units.) The RFP will also be published on the NDE website and will be distributed and explained during the annual school

administrator's conference (Administrators Days in Kearney, Nebraska) on July 31 and August 1, 2002.

The applications for funding for the competitive portion of the Nebraska EETT grants will be due by October 1, 2002. Grants must be hand delivered to the Nebraska Department of Education by 5:00 p.m. (CTD) on that date or must be postmarked by October 1, 2002.

After August 1, 2002 and prior to the deadline for submitting applications, the Nebraska Department of Education will provide funding from the Administrative portion of the grant funds to Educational Service Units that wish to provide grant-writing assistance to school districts that qualify as high poverty, high technology need, or low performing schools. NDE personnel may also take part in the staff development sessions.

During this time period, the Department's Educational Technology Center personnel will recruit reviewers on a nationwide basis to review grant applications with a goal of enough reviewers so that each application will be read by five reviewers. Reviewers will receive a stipend for the administrative funds.

After October 1, 2002, the applications will be reviewed by NDE ETC staff to ascertain eligibility and completeness. The applications will then be forwarded electronically to the reviewers for comment via an electronic system such as facilitate.com. Prior to November 1 the reviewers will meet via teleconference to finalize reports and recommendations.

By November 15 schools districts will be notified, pending State Board of Education approval, of the outcome of the application and the amount of the award if applicable. Grant Award Notifications (GANs) will be sent following State Board of Education approval of the grant awards.

Spending authority for Local Education Agencies will commence when the LEA receives the Grant Award Notification (GAN). Funds will be disbursed to the LEA on a reimbursement basis using Nebraska Department of Education forms 28-003 and 28-004 as documentation. Funds will be disbursed electronically on a quarterly basis unless LEA finances dictate the need for an emergency disbursement.

Local Education Agencies will be required to submit the reports required for the Nebraska Department of Education to satisfy reporting requirements to the United States Department of Education. Records of grant applications and reimbursements will be maintained by NDE.

Priorities for High Need

Only Local Education Agencies (LEA) that receive funds under Part A of Title I are eligible for EETT formula funding. Though not all of the LEAs will qualify as high need they must be eligible under Part A of Title I to receive Title II Part D formula funding. To receive its share of the funds, the LEA must have a local technology plan in place as part of the District Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement and must submit the plan electronically to the Nebraska Department of Education for certification.

Title II Part D competitive funds can be applied for only by High Need LEA's or a consortium that contain a High Need LEA as a primary beneficiary of the project although the High Need LEA does not need to be the fiscal agent for the project.

High Need is defined as:

- (A) the highest percentages or numbers of children from families with incomes below the poverty line; and
- (B) operates one or more schools identified for improvement or corrective action under Title I; or
- (C) has a substantial need for assistance in acquiring technology.

For determining “high” need for criteria (A) above, the State will use the poverty data determined by the Department of Education in allocating grants under Title I, Part A. Nebraska has been approved to use an alternate method for calculating Title I, Part A funds that averages census poor and counts of school-age children eligible for free lunch under the child Nutrition Program. Use of this data allows for a consistent definition of poverty between the formula and competitive grants under Title II – Educational Technology State Grants Programs. An LEA would also need to meet criteria (B) or (C). An LEA with a “high” technology need has been defined as: 50% or more of the staff has not had adequate in-service in the integration of technology into the classroom or if technology is not integrated into 50% or more of the classes.

Equitable Distribution of EETT Funds

In administering the funds under Title II, Part D the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) will strive to make the opportunity to apply for funding available to all school districts regardless of size or location.

NDE will notify each district in the state via mail and via electronic mail and website of the opportunity to apply for competitive funds through the Request for Proposals (RFP).

The Request for Proposals will be available at the Nebraska School Administrators Association Administrators Days in Kearney, Nebraska July 31, 2002 and August 1, 2002 and prior to the opening of school in succeeding years.

The Nebraska Department of Education will provide funding, through the administrative monies, for High Poverty, High Technology Need agencies to receive assistance in grant preparation through the Educational Service Units.

Upon receiving application for funding NDE will strive to allot funding in a manner roughly proportional to the rural-urban split of the student population and along educational service unit boundaries assuming eligible applications of suitable quality are received.

Criteria for Local Education Agencies to Apply for EETT Funding

The sole purpose of Title II, Part D- Enhanced Education Through Technology in Nebraska's Consolidated Plan is to facilitate and enhance learning for all students. The objectives, strategies and activities that follow relate to and address the three goals of Title II, Part D. Those goals are: to improve student academic achievement through the use of technology in elementary and secondary schools; to assist every student in crossing the digital divide by ensuring that every student is technologically literate by the time the student finishes the eighth grade, regardless of the student's race, ethnicity, gender, family income, geographic

location or disability; and to encourage the effective integration of technology resources and systems with teacher training and curriculum development to establish research-based instructional methods that can be widely implemented as best practices by state educational agencies and local educational agencies.

Objective One – A Technology-Based Data and Information Management System

The first objective is to establish and implement a technology based data and information management system that includes template or model and process that correlates with, facilitates and enhances the Nebraska School Improvement Model. The following strategies are associated with this objective.

This template and the data and information it provides, when used by schools, will provide the basis for identifying the student performance levels within schools in all disciplines based on the goals set by each local school district and or learning center.

The electronic management system (model and template) will be used to bridge the gap between data and information collection, aggregation and reporting to intervention for improving instruction and increased student achievement at the local district level.

The electronically managed data and information will be used to identify schools with performance challenges and provide intervention strategies to assist in resolving their challenges.

The template or model will be designed so the required school district technology plans are integrated into the school improvement plans and submitted electronically.

Local Education Agency Activities Under Objective One

- The Local Education Agency (LEA) may utilize EETT formula or competitive grant funds to develop Data and Information Management System. This system will be used in incorporating the district technology plan into the district-wide school improvement plan.
- EETT funds may be used for resources or staff development in support of the Data and Information Management System.
- Resources may include equipment for developing the necessary infrastructure to support the project including but not limited to servers, software and line charges. Staff Development can include, but not be limited to contracting with Educational Service Units for training in management of the system and in-school training for staff to use the system.
- Local Education Agencies applying for competitive EETT grants to support the Data and Information Management System will receive additional points if the application will, if successful, utilize EETT formula grant funds in conjunction with discretionary funds.
- Local Education Agencies may use EETT formula grant funds or competitive grant funds in collaboration with and follow up to the Web Page Development Project in which Local Education Agencies used Technology Literacy Challenge Fund

money to contract with Educational Service Units for training in a project which will result in each teacher maintaining a web page for communication with students, faculty, and community.

- Local Education Agencies will develop and maintain the district technology plan as part of the district-wide school improvement plan and will submit the plan electronically to the Nebraska Department of Education for certification prior to disbursement of EETT funds.

Objective Two – Enhance Teaching and Improve Student Performance via Technology

The second objective is to facilitate and enhance teaching and increase student performance with the use of technology and align it with the Nebraska School Improvement Plan (template and model). The following strategies are associated with these objectives:

- Identify school technology infrastructure, hardware and software needs as they relate to school improvement and increased student performance and help provide for acquisition.
- Provide for the delivery of and access to educational resources and instruction that will enhance and facilitate student learning for all schools and students.
- Promote the infusion of student technology standards (Nebraska Technology Essential Learnings for Students) in all Nebraska schools and their curriculum in grades P-12.
- Align all resources and curriculum with Nebraska Standards and Essential Learnings.
- Develop, identify and provide access to staff development via technology to improve teaching that will enhance student performance.
- Promote the infusion of the Nebraska Teacher Technology Competencies in teacher in-service and pre-service staff development programs.
- Promote the infusion of Nebraska Administrator Technology Competencies in administrator in-service and pre-service staff development programs.

Local Education Agency Activities Under Objective Two

Enhanced learning for all students is the purpose of the expenditure of EETT funds in the Local Education Agencies. Every student should meet the Nebraska Technology Essential Learnings for Students. EETT funding may be used:

- To help in providing the infrastructure necessary for learning through technology to take place. This includes but is not limited to equipment, software and line charges and technology inventory and needs surveys.
- To promote integration of technology into the curriculum and to assure that all content is aligned with standards through the Data and Information Management

System.

- For staff development to enhance teaching and thereby improve student performance through technology in line with the Nebraska Teacher Technology Competencies and the Nebraska Administrator Technology Competencies.
- For stipends for training, online staff development and access to resources to align the curriculum to standards. EETT funds can also be used to train teachers in the Web Page Development Project in conjunction with the Educational Service Units and local trainers.
- Local Education Agencies applying for competitive EETT grants will receive additional points if the application will utilize EETT formula grant funds in conjunction with discretionary funds.

Objective Three – Evidence of Technology Literacy and Enhanced Learning

Objective three will provide evidence that shows student will be able to function successfully in society with their knowledge and use of technology and that student achievement and school improvement will be enhanced through the use of technology. The following strategies are identified to help carry out objective three:

- The Nebraska Technology Essential Learnings for Students will be used as the base for developing criteria for measuring the success of students in learning how to function successfully in our society. One measurement will be taken during the 8th grade and then again during the 12th grade.
- The data and information compiled, aggregated and reported by each school and or learning center based on the electronic School Improvement/ Technology Management Model will be used as the source for measuring student achievement and school improvement resulting from the use of technology in teaching and learning.

Local Education Agency Activities Under Objective Three

Evaluation of the efficiency of the EETT funds in improving student learning will be through the Local Education Agency reporting of student progress via the Data and Information Management System using evaluation instruments of the district's choosing. EETT funds may be used:

- To establish Data and Information Management System to maintain and report information.
- To train personnel to maintain and report via this system. This training may take place at a statewide training in a train-the-trainer format, an educational service unit training, or at the local district level.
- To assist in the assessment of the effects of use of technology on the performance of students as indicated by evaluation instruments at the local district. Baseline reports will be the results prior to the application for EETT funds with comparison

by annual reporting. The basis for the evaluation of student learning is the Student Essential Learnings.

- To evaluate the integration of technology into courses in the local district curriculum and to ascertain how the Student Essential Learnings in Technology are integrated into the school offerings. Evaluation will be of student learning and also student technology literacy.
- To evaluate staff development and to assess staff in line with the Nebraska Teacher Technology Competencies and the Nebraska Administrator Technology Competencies.
- To profile their system in a technology needs survey to ascertain equipment and staff development needs on a district-wide and individual educator basis. This may be used to maintain and update the district technology plan as part of the district-wide school improvement plan.
- Local Education Agencies applying for competitive EETT grants will receive additional points if the application will utilize EETT formula grant funds in conjunction with discretionary funds.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools – Reservation for the Governor (Title IV, Part A, section 4126)

Twenty percent (20%) of Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities funds are to be reserved for allocation to the Governor's program. The entity designated to receive these funds for the Governor's Office is the Office of Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Addiction Services (OMHSAAS); Behavioral Health Division; Nebraska Health and Human Service System. The Deputy Director for Behavioral Health is George Hanigan, P.O. Box 94728, Lincoln, NE 68509-4728, 402-479-5126.

Accounting and deposit of federal funds pertaining to the Safe and Drugs Free Schools and Communities program is handled by the Nebraska Health and Human Service System's Division of Finance and Support, P.O. Box 95026, Lincoln, NE 68509-5026. The Governor's representative for the administration of Governor's portion of Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities funds is Laurie Barger Sutter, Prevention Program Manager, OMHSAAS, Nebraska Health and Human Service System, P.O. Box 94728, Lincoln, NE 68509-4728, 402-479-5573. The DUNS number for Nebraska Health and Human Service System is 197603798.

Under the auspices of a State Incentive Cooperative Agreement (SICA) that was awarded to the Nebraska Governor's Office in September, 2001, state agencies that administer federal Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD) funds, as well as representatives from key constituent and stakeholder groups, have been convened in a SICA advisory council entitled Nebraska Partners in Prevention (NePiP). Through SICA and NePiP, the State of Nebraska will seek to develop and implement policies and procedures that will result in enhanced coordination of the state prevention system. Key goals include:

- a) The development of a common community planning process that accurately reflects and comprehensively addresses local community needs;
- b) The creation of a capacity-building and technical assistance system which empowers communities at all levels of readiness to utilize common planning processes in order to identify needs, develop strategies to address those needs, and secure the funding and other resources needed to achieve desired outcomes;
- c) The creation of common data collection and needs assessment system to ensure that sound information for designing and selecting effective prevention strategies is available at both the state and local levels; and
- d) Coordination, leveraging and/or redirection of funding streams and resources to more effectively address substance abuse prevention needs. Accordingly, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities funds will be coordinated and leveraged as an integral component of a continuum of statewide prevention services.

Subgrants and contracts awarded under the Governor's Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities allocation will be required to produce measurable outcomes in changing beliefs, attitudes and behaviors among youth related to alcohol, tobacco, drugs and/or violence in order to produce substantively improved academic outcomes. In addition, selection criteria will require that all subgrants and contracts will provide community-based services that are nonduplicative and that complement and coordinate with SDFSCA school-based programming coordinated by the Nebraska Department of Education. The timeline for major subgrants and contracts under the Governor's allocation is July 1 through June 30, with a separate mini grant process which provides smaller amounts of funding for local initiatives which runs from September 1 to August 31.

Community Service Grants (Title IV, Part A, section 4126)

In the summer of 2002, NDE staff will convene a group of stakeholders, including representatives from the Crime Commission, LEAs and Alternative Education programs, Probation, Parole, Student Assistance Program, Community Based programs, and the Governor's office representative. The purpose will be to gather information on what is currently being done in Nebraska with Community Service for youth who have been suspended or expelled and what "promising practices" are available for implementation in the future.

An advisory group will be appointed in the fall of 2002 to develop a process for awarding contracts for direct services for LEAs. Issues to be addressed include the criteria for contracting and the requirement to promote improved academic achievement. The NDE assures that the state will meet the regulatory requirements for this new program but the state has yet to receive guidance on what those requirements will be. If guidance is received this summer, the guidelines for subcontracts, selection criteria, and how the contractors will promote academic achievement will be developed and submitted for review by September 10, 2002.

Three priorities for students who have been suspended or expelled have been identified in preliminary discussions with stakeholders:

- 1) promoting the effectiveness of community service programs for those who are already serving suspended or expelled students,
- 2) providing information to LEAs and Community programs about community service options, and
- 3) providing staff development on school reintegration approaches for these youth.

Proposed Timeline (contingent on guidance from U. S. D.E.)

Community Service Grants	
Dates	Grant Activity
November 2002	Advisory Group Convenes
January 2003	Request for Proposals
May 2003	Award Contracts

21st Century Community Learning Centers (Title IV, Part B)

Administration and supervision The Nebraska Department of Education will be responsible for the administration and supervision of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Grant Program.

Needs and resources assessment Due to time constraints, a statewide needs assessment will not be conducted specifically for the 21st CCLC program. Data substantiating needs and gaps in resources has been gathered from a variety of state and federal sources.

Advisory Committee – Policy & Procedure Recommendations An advisory committee was created to formulate policies and procedures for the 21st CCLC program. The group includes representatives from business, private schools, parents, health agencies, community-based organizations, law enforcement, substance abuse/mental health agencies, state agencies (child care licensure), and after-school program directors, current federal grantees, teachers, principals, superintendents, and the Commissioner of Education. The group met in March and April of 2002 and provided input on:

- statewide needs,
- gaps in resources,
- range of grant award amounts,
- scope and duration of projects,
- application content,
- indirect cost policies,
- non-allowable costs,

- state competitive priorities,
- other state grant selection criteria (e.g. geographic diversity),
- on-site review for applicant finalists,
- evidence of substantial progress, and
- grant award process timeline.

Selection criteria for competitive process NDE will use a competitive process to award the grants. Both absolute and competitive priorities will be used to determine the most needy applicants.

Absolute Priorities Per the authorizing statute, NDE will make 21st CCLC grant awards only to eligible entities that propose to serve students who primarily attend:

- (a) schools eligible for Title I schoolwide programs; or
- (b) schools that serve a high percentage of students from low-income families; and
- (c) the families of students described in (a) and (b).

Additionally, the following procedures and criteria will be used for reviewing applications and awarding funds to eligible entities on a competitive basis, which includes procedures and criteria that take into consideration the likelihood that a proposed community learning center will help participating students meet local content and student academic achievement standards:

Competitive Priorities Applicants will receive competitive priority based on:

- Their proposal to serve schools designated in need of improvement under Section 1116 of Title I (federal competitive priority);
- Their submission of a collaborative proposal that involves at least one school district receiving funds under Part A of Title I and a community based organization or other public or private entity (federal competitive priority);
- Student mobility rates and the extent of poverty as these factors are directly related to student achievement (state competitive priority).

Other State Selection Criteria In an effort to address the issue of geographic diversity of the projects awarded across the state, Nebraska may award grants based on highest overall score within specific geographic areas (e.g. federal congressional districts). However, applications must meet minimum score requirements in order to be awarded funds regardless of geographic diversity issues.

Core Program Requirements Each applicant will be asked to address how their program will address three broad areas of service that will help assure that programs are well-rounded and will help participating students meet local content and student achievement standards. These three areas of service include care, education and development.

Caregiving experiences that:

- Nurture by providing one-on-one and group experiences,
- Guide by providing positive role models and encouraging positive behaviors,
- Protect by providing a safe, secure location under adult supervision, and
- Meet basic needs by providing nutritious snacks and a safe environment for out-of-school time.

Educational experiences to promote learning, which may include but not be limited to:

- Providing a strong focus on core academic areas (e.g. reading, writing, and math) where academic improvement is necessary locally,
- Providing services to assist students in meeting local achievement standards,
- Providing tutoring services and mentoring programs,
- Providing programs for limited English proficiency students that emphasize language skills and academic achievement, and
- Programs that provide assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled to allow the students to improve their academic achievement.
- Developmental experiences to promote physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of children as well as to strengthen family relationships and support:
 - Provide a variety of services to meet the local needs of the community, including drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, and character education programs.
 - Provide programming that promotes parental involvement and family literacy.

Timeline

21st Century Community Learning Centers	
Dates (2002- 03)	Grant Activity
March and April, 2002	Advisory Committee meetings
August, 2002	Grant information disseminated
September – October, 2002	Grant writing workshops

Nebraska's Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement

February - 2003	Grant applications due
March - 2003	Peer review of grant applications
April - 2003	Grants awarded to successful applicants
July 1 - 2003	Local grant period begins

Review process Grants will be reviewed in a multi-layered process. First, NDE staff will complete an intake process to check the applications for eligibility and required elements and then log the application into a database. Eligible applications will be evaluated by using a peer review process. Current plans are that review teams will be composed of three individuals each. Potential readers include representatives from the following groups:

- Public and private school superintendents,
- Public and private school principals,
- Public and private classroom teachers (e.g. regular, special education, Title I),
- Postsecondary education representatives,
- Educational Service Unit staff developers,
- Current 21st CCLC project directors, and
- Out-of-state personnel involved with 21st CCLC projects.

Readers will be invited by letter so that an in-depth description of the program can be included as well as a listing of the preferred qualities for qualified readers. Final selection of readers will consider variables such as representation across desired groups (i.e. superintendents, principals, etc.), grant writing/scoring experience, and subject matter knowledge. Readers will also be screened for conflict of interest and will not be allowed to read proposals from their community. Readers will receive an orientation to the 21st CCLC program and the scoring process. The entire group of readers will practice on one sample proposal before the actual proposals are reviewed.

Readers will use a detailed rubric of required application elements to score the applications. At this time, the proposed grant application sections and point values are as follows:

<u>Application Section</u>	<u>Point Value</u>
Need	20 points
Project Design & Management Plan	50 points
Evaluation	15 points
Resources/Budget	<u>15 points</u>
Total Narrative Value	100 points

The need for the project is weighted heavily in terms of the assigned point value as well as the absolute and competitive priorities that relate to need (e.g. Title I schoolwide, schools in need of improvement, extent of poverty and mobility) identified earlier. The Project Design section is heavily weighted to ensure that high quality plans that focus on academic improvement will be those most likely to be funded. Consensus feedback from the scoring team will be sent to unsuccessful applicants. Recommendations for funding will be reviewed

by the Commissioner and the Governor and will then be presented to the Nebraska State Board of Education for their approval per board policy. Grant award notifications will then be executed.

Technical Assistance for Applicants Grant writing workshops will be held to assist applicants with the application process. On-site regional workshops may be offered and/or the workshop may be available via satellite transmission so that prospective applicants do not have to travel long distances to access the workshop.

Technical Assistance for Grantees The NDE 21st CCLC Office will require that new grantees attend an orientation/training session. In addition, other NDE departments will provide technical assistance in areas where existing staff has expertise. NDE may provide assistance in areas such as fiscal management, early childhood education issues, curriculum and instruction, food and nutrition, and guidance and counseling. Additional technical assistance may be offered based on the results of the needs assessment described below. See the "professional development" section for more information about training opportunities that will be available to grantees.

Needs assessment Planning for technical assistance and professional development will begin by consulting with current federal 21st CCLC grantees to determine what their needs have been as they have moved through their project period. Based on this pre-planning, a needs assessment will be developed for the new state grantees to assess their needs. Follow-up contacts with the grantees will allow the identification of new or changing needs as they move through each year of their project.

Professional development Applicants will describe their plan for staff development in their grant application and be asked to budget funds for state, regional and national training. Based on the results of the state needs assessment of new state grantees, the state will offer staff development opportunities to grantees. Some professional development will be offered through NDE while other training may be available from other agencies at no cost. If there is a significant need that cannot be served by existing agencies, NDE will contract with providers to offer appropriate professional development opportunities to help ensure project success. The goal of the professional development and technical assistance is to ensure the implementation of effective strategies at the local level.

A wide number of professional development resources are available through, but not limited to, the organizations listed below.

- Early Childhood Department, Nebraska Department of Education. Training opportunities are made available across the state to childcare providers.
- National Center for Community Education (NCCE). The NCCE offers a variety of training opportunities for grantees, which help them to develop a long-range plan, successfully manage a project, provide opportunities to network and share resources and provide access to resources to assist project personnel with their project-specific concerns. Workshops are centered on the following six training tracks:
 - Managing a project,
 - Building community collaboration with community agencies,
 - Providing appropriate and exemplary programming,
 - Integrating K-12 and the after-school program,

- Selecting and designing evaluation around preferred outcomes, and
 - Communicating information about the project.
- Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. The Nebraska Children and Families Foundation is a statewide private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to working in partnership with communities to improve the health and well being of children and families of all cultural backgrounds.
- Nebraska Child Care Licensing. The Nebraska Child Care Licensing Office can provide guidance about the licensing requirements and process. Information about a childcare subsidy program is also available.
- University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension. The University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Services is extensively involved in programming for youth. The Extension Service offers programming such as *Character Counts!* In addition, the extension service offers ServSafe, conducted in cooperation with state agencies and the Nebraska Restaurant Association, to provide training in safe food-handling procedures.
- Nebraska 21st CCLC Office, Nebraska Department of Education. The Nebraska Department of Education will offer, or contract with consultants to offer, training in areas of need where workshops are not available or special circumstances such as project deficiencies or demand warrants special offerings.

Local grantee participation in professional development opportunities Applicants will be asked to budget for state, regional and national training opportunities. Grantees will be required to attend a new grantee orientation session. In addition, it will be strongly recommended, but not required, that grantees participate in high-quality professional development experiences. NDE reserves the right to require training in certain areas if statewide needs dictate.

Frequency of professional development offerings Training on a state, regional and national level will be available on an annual basis. Additional training may be offered on an as-needed basis.

Instructional programs and practices based on scientific research Professional development opportunities will focus on strategies that are supported by scientific research, if applicable. Absent the availability of scientific research, best practices will be recommended based on the experience of practitioners or related professionals.

Monitoring local grantees Project progress will be monitored through data collected through annual performance reports. Additionally, annual site visits by the Nebraska Department of Education are planned for each project. The focus of the yearly evaluations will be to use formative evaluation data to improve local projects and provide for statewide accountability.

Promoting parental and community participation in schools Nebraska will promote the 21st CCLC program as a strategy to promote parental and community participation in the schools. Parents may participate on grant writing teams and local program advisory committees. In addition, parents could volunteer as mentors and tutors or volunteer their services in their area of expertise. Since community collaboration is the key to the success and sustainability of

21st CCLC programs, applicants must show a strong plan to collaborate with, and encourage community participation in, the schools to be served.

Program design The Nebraska Department of Education will use performance indicators and performance measures to evaluate programs and activities. In order to enhance the success of grantees in meeting local and state goals as well as reaching the desired program outcomes, applicants will be asked to develop a program that:

- (a) is based upon an assessment of objective data regarding the need for before- and after-school programs and activities in schools and communities;
- (b) is based upon an established set of performance measures aimed at ensuring the availability of high-quality academic enrichment opportunities; and
- (c) is based upon (if appropriate) scientifically based research that provides evidence that the program or activity will help students meet the state and local student academic achievement standards.

Assessing substantial progress/local program periodic evaluation Applicants will report on their progress in reaching objectives that include yearly benchmarks. Substantial progress will be based on the extent to which grantees meet the project objectives. Because evaluation data will be submitted yearly, the state will be able to assess progress in meeting local as well as state goals.

Statewide evaluation plan The effectiveness of the Nebraska 21st CCLC grant program will be evaluated annually on a statewide basis. Information on project outcomes will be gathered from the individual annual performance reports of all state grantees. An external evaluator will be used to determine the extent of progress in meeting the statewide performance indicators.

Performance indicators and measures The performance indicators that will be used to evaluate Nebraska 21st CCLC grant programs are listed below.

Goal 1. Participants in Nebraska 21st CCLC programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes.

- Increasing percentages of students regularly participating in the program meet or exceed state and local academic achievement standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Students regularly participating in the program will show improvements on measures such as school attendance, classroom performance, and negative behaviors (e.g., such as those resulting in disciplinary action).

Goal 2. Nebraska 21st CCLC programs will offer a range of high quality educational, developmental, and recreational services as indicated by the extent to which the following state outcomes are met:

- More than 85% of the centers will offer high quality services in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics.
- More than 85% of the centers will offer regular enrichment and support activities such as nutrition and health, art, music, technology, physical education, and recreation.

- 100% of the centers will establish and maintain partnerships with one or more community-based organizations to increase levels of community collaboration.
- More than 75% of centers will combine federal and state assistance from other diverse programs (i.e., Training Assistance for Needy Families, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Americorps) with the 21st CCLC program in ways that appropriately enhance the ability of the center to reach its goals.
- More than 85% of centers will regularly (e.g. monthly or bi-monthly) offer services to family members of those children served by the 21st CCLC Grant Program.
- More than 75% of centers will offer services a minimum of 20 hours a week on average and will provide services when school is not in session, such as during the summer and holidays.

Goal 3. Nebraska 21st CCLC programs will serve high-need school attendance areas.

- More than 80% of Nebraska 21st CCLC programs will serve high-need school attendance areas, which include low-performing schools per Title I.

Interventions for lack of substantial progress A grantee that does not meet substantial progress goals will be put on "project improvement" status. A grantee on project improvement status will be required to submit an improvement plan, which describes the corrective action that will be taken in order to make substantial progress in the coming year. If after two years of consecutive project improvement status a project has still not met minimum substantial progress targets, the Nebraska Department of Education may reduce or entirely terminate funding.

Collecting data from local grantees Project progress will be monitored through data collected through annual performance reports. Additionally, annual site visits by the Nebraska Department of Education are planned for each project. The focus of the yearly evaluations will be to use formative evaluation data to improve local projects and provide for statewide accountability.

- 3. Describe how the State will monitor and provide professional development and technical assistance to LEAs, schools, and other subgrantees to help them implement their programs and meet the State's (and those entities' own) performance goals and objectives. This should include a description of assistance the SEA will provide to LEAs, schools, and other subgrantees in identifying and implementing effective instructional programs and practices based on scientific research.**

Professional Development

The State promotes the use of quality training programs by establishing a set of standards for professional development. The Nebraska Quality Indicators of Effective Staff Development, created in 1997-98, contains a comprehensive listing of benchmarks that direct training activities in schools. The guidelines have become part of the materials schools refer to when working with the State's academic standards program. And as such, act as a monitoring control mechanism when schools are reviewed under that system.

Based on those indicators, the State Board of Education has adopted a policy promoting effective professional development. It directs schools to use training resources in ways that will successfully improve the quality of education practices. That policy, the Quality Indicators and other components in the State's Approval & Accreditation process will be used to review training activities that occur in schools and ensure they meet the intent of the Law.

The NDE draws upon its partnership with the ESUs in the state to direct staff development activities that occur in school districts. The service unit professional development network sponsors training programs for schools and helps guide local decision-makers in their selection of locally financed workshops. The Educational Service Unit Staff Developers Association (ESUSDA) provides a structure for ensuring quality services, identifying needs across the state, coordinating activities and resources and maintaining information and records.

Teacher education institutions in Nebraska are actively involved, along with the Educational Service Units, in providing appropriate in-service and pre-service opportunities to assure the availability of high quality teachers and administrators for all Nebraska students.

A unique aspect of Nebraska's approach to early childhood is its Early Childhood Training Center and web of 14 Regional Training Coalitions (boundaries congruent with the ESUs). This system that is supported through a combination of education, health and human services and Head Start resources, works to assure that all staff working with young children in home-center- and school-based settings have access to quality training. This system enables Nebraska to:

- Meet local training needs,
- Coordinate existing and new training opportunities,
- Collaborate to open training across program settings,
- Support professional development and program improvement, and
- Increase the use of technology for collaboration and training.

Effective Instructional Programs and Practices

Professional Development provided through statewide initiatives, such as Reading First, and activities funded through the various programs, including Title I, Title II, Part A and Part D, will be monitored for effectiveness in meeting state goals and program requirements.

A multi-agency task force of ESU, IHE, NDE and representatives from the State Plan Advisory Committee will be established specifically to address how the State will provide information and technical assistance to all districts and agencies on the new requirement in NCLB to identify and implement effective instructional programs and practices based on scientific research. The Task Force will be charged with defining criteria for scientific research and a process that teachers and administrators can use to determine if instructional programs and practices are appropriate. The Task Force will begin work early in the 2002-03 school year so that information is available as soon as possible. In September of 2002, the

Department of Education and staff from McREL will provide a series of regional workshops for principals of existing schoolwide projects and newly eligible schools planning to become schoolwide projects and for existing Comprehensive School Reform projects. These workshops will focus on using scientific research based services, programs, instruction and professional development to improve the achievement of all children. The Task Force will use the information provided by McREL for the schoolwide projects in their work.

Staff from the Mid-Continent Regional Laboratory (MCREL) have provided service unit personnel with information about the "Research into Practice" series and will continue to conduct training sessions in the future. Such experiences have been designed to build a focus on using validated training activities.

Technical Assistance

The SEA is organizing cross-program teams to provide more individualized and integrated technical assistance to all school districts. The cross-program teams will include representation from federal programs, curriculum and instruction, accreditation, technology, staff development, special education and career and technical education. Each Nebraska school system will be assigned to a Department cross-program team. The Department staff involved will include all who currently work with directly with schools in any capacity or role. This includes the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Leadership Council members, and team members from Curriculum and Instruction (including Career and Technical Education), Technology, Professional Development, Early Childhood, Special Education and all federal programs. Their initial responsibility will be to assist their assigned schools to develop a preliminary comprehensive district improvement plan for the 2002-03 school year and a final comprehensive district improvement plan for the 2003-04 school year. The district plan will be modeled after the State's Comprehensive plan with a focus on improving student achievement through coordinating and integrating efforts and activities including federal programs. The advantages are multiple to all involved. NDE staff will gain an in-depth understanding of their districts' strengths, efforts and needs as well as a greater understanding of the role and responsibilities of the many components and programs, including federal programs, supporting school improvement efforts at state and local levels. Districts will gain assistance in developing their plans as well as an on-going advocate in the Department to facilitate requests and resources. The staff of the federal programs will retain responsibility for expertise in program management and compliance responsibilities.

The Comprehensive State Plan for Improvement provides a vehicle for coordinating professional development activities and opportunities provided through the Department of Education and other agencies, including higher education. The Advisory Committee for the State Plan includes representatives of major organizations and agencies serving education throughout the State. The Department draws on the expertise and experience of many individuals in partnerships and collaborative activities to provide technical assistance to districts and schools. Participants in advisory groups such as the State Plan Advisory Committee and the Committee of Practitioners as well as ad hoc groups are selected given consideration to geographic representation from across the State, district size, the expertise and experience of the individual as well as representation of stakeholder groups including classroom teachers, parents, building principals, curriculum and assessment specialists, higher education institutions, private schools, ESU and district administrators and connections to other groups and organizations.

Monitoring Programs

Under the previous Consolidated State Plan, the programs involved developed the Integrated Site Review. This will be expanded to include the programs covered in this consolidated plan. An Integrated Site Review includes reviewing appropriate documentation to support each program's requirements and a team meeting of teachers and administrators, staff and parents of the appropriate schools, including private schools, and agencies served by the programs being reviewed. The protocol for the team meeting includes a discussion of services provided and how they support the district or school's improvement efforts, the inclusion and appropriate services for all students, and parent/community involvement. All districts participate in an Integrated Site Review once every three years except for the two largest districts that are visited annually.

Even Start was one of the programs in Nebraska's Consolidated State Plan under IASA and is included in the Integrated Site Reviews. In addition, Even Start programs receive biannual site visits. A structured questionnaire is used as a guide to collectively reflect on local Even Start goals, evaluation, fiscal file review, and suggestions for improvement.

During the 2002-03 school year, a task force will be formed to review and revise the Integrated Site Review to insure an emphasis on effective instructional programs and practices based on scientific research and other new requirements from No Child Left Behind. Once final regulations and guidance from U. S. D. E. is available, the SEA will prepare guidance on how districts can review the practices and programs in all federal programs.

Even Start programs are provided with information about research practices in family literacy, reading, early literacy and encouraged to develop strategies based on valid, reliable practices. The SEA will provide technical assistance and training opportunities to enhance awareness and understanding of scientific-based models and approaches.

The Integrated Site Review uses a checklist of program compliance requirements as the basis for reviewing documentation. The guidance indicates that, although each entity is on a defined schedule, reviews may occur whenever a need or concern arises. The Integrated Site Review checklist could appropriately be used for off-site monitoring and desk reviews during interim years to monitor project compliance. Programs are also monitored through analysis of reports and financial data submitted on a regular basis throughout the year.

4. Describe the Statewide system of school support under section 1117 to ensure that all schools meet the State's academic content and student achievement standards, including how the State will provide assistance to low-performing schools.

Nebraska's ESUs are a vital resource in providing technical assistance, professional development and support to the schools and districts throughout the state. The ESUs serve as Nebraska's Statewide System of School Support as required under section 1117. Each ESU has:

- Professional developers who have been trained for their role as providers of professional development including:
 - Support to districts in all phases of school improvement including accreditation and North Central Accreditation,

- Standards, assessment and accountability for student performance, and
 - Assistance to schools, including low-performing schools, in attaining resources and training to address identified instructional and curriculum needs.
- A technology specialist to assist districts in using technology for --
 - Data collection and reporting, and
 - Instructional support for student learning.
- Curriculum and other specialists to assist with identifying and supporting appropriate classroom instructional approaches, practices and materials.
- ESU staff are comprised of educational staff (teachers and administrators) with demonstrated expertise to assist the schools.

Additional staff are being added to the school support teams in the ESUs:

- Through the use of the technical assistance funds available through Reading First, Reading Specialist expertise will be added in the ESUs to provide and coordinate professional development in the area of Reading/Language Arts.
- A specialist in Special Education is being funded through the SEA to provide technical assistance and support.

As the SEA implements the Department-wide cross-program teams, it is an expectation that SEA staff will work closely with the ESU staff in their efforts to assist schools and districts improve. When schools have been identified as having areas of low performance based on the STARS results or IMPACT Title I schools identified under section 1116, the SEA and ESU staff will be notified and, collaboratively with the school, will establish a plan of technical assistance based on the needs of the school.

5. Describe the activities the state will conduct to –

- a. Help Title I schools make effective use of schoolwide programs to improve the achievement of all students, including specific steps the SEA is taking and will take to modify or eliminate State fiscal and accounting barriers so that schools can easily consolidate federal, State, and local funds for schoolwide programs;**

Throughout the last two school years, a Task Force of teachers and administrators from schoolwide programs has been developing a peer review process and rubric for reviewing rating all schoolwide plans. The rubric is based on quality indicators of the ESEA required schoolwide components and will provide a rating on each. Schoolwide projects must meet all required components of NCLB. The rating will provide baseline data for measuring progress over time. The rating of local reviews will allow schools to continuously strive to improve their overall rating by addressing areas that need improvement.

In April 2002, 144 schoolwide plans for currently operating schoolwide projects and newly eligible schools were peer reviewed using the schoolwide plan rubric. The rating for each plan was returned to the school with directions for addressing any area found to be incomplete (not meeting the requirement components). The school will submit

documentation to support any missing item. Each school is also encouraged to annually review their plans to measure progress toward implementing effective schoolwide projects.

The results of the peer review process will also be used to develop technical assistance workshops across the state to assist schoolwide projects improve. In September of 2002, the Department of Education and staff from McREL will provide a series of regional workshops for principals of existing schoolwide projects and newly eligible schools planning to become schoolwide projects and for existing Comprehensive School Reform projects. These workshops will focus on using scientific research based services, programs, instruction and professional development to improve the achievement of all children. Note: Since the rubric was developed prior to reauthorization of ESEA, it will be revised to include the new requirements of No Child Left Behind on using scientific research based instruction and practices and highly qualified staff. A copy of the current rubric can be obtained at www.nde.state.ne.us/TITLE1.title1.htm.

The Department of Education is creating a task force of staff and school district personnel to study the financial changes required under No Child Left Behind. The NCLB Financial Task Force studying the consolidation of applications and financial reporting will examine and develop guidance for the processes and procedures at the state and local levels for accounting and reporting of receipts and expenditures of all federal programs, consolidation of administrative funds at the local level under consolidated applications, payments and end-of-year financial and progress reporting. This comprehensive analysis will specifically address and identify barriers at the state and local levels for appropriate consolidation of funds in schoolwide projects. The NCLB Financial Task Force will begin its work in June of 2002 with an expected completion date for all activities by June of 2003.

- b. Ensure that all teachers, particularly those in high-poverty areas and those in schools in need of improvement, are highly qualified. This description should include the help States will provide to LEAS and schools to**
 - i. Conduct effective professional development activities**
 - ii. Recruit and hire highly qualified teachers, including those licensed or certified through alternative routes; and**
 - iii. Retain highly qualified teachers**

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) will provide all potential applicants for Title II funds with information related to the definition of professional development as cited in section 9101(34). The text of the law dealing with that issue will be emphasized on the agency's web site that is the primary source of all material for people seeking information related to the program. In addition, educators attending regional meetings held by the agency's Title I program during the spring of 2002 had the opportunity to discuss technical points concerning the matter with staff members from that section.

The 18 Educational Service Units in the State play a significant role in organizing and providing staff development services for teachers and school districts. The NDE has established a strong link to that organization by helping its staff members gain the capacity to implement quality training programs. NDE staff members regularly attend organizational meetings held for ESU personnel and coordinate statewide staff development efforts through the group. The NDE will draw upon its relationship and contacts with staff development staff from the ESUs to ensure that school administrators understand the implications of the NCLB legislation relating to professional development activities supported with Title II funds.

The Nebraska State of the Schools Report provides information on the qualifications of all teachers in each school district. The Department annually conducts studies to determine the shortage of qualified staff throughout the state. This information will be analyzed regarding high-poverty areas and schools in need of improvement so these areas can be prioritized.

Teacher recruitment initiatives with the Nebraska Partnership for Quality Teacher Education Project (NPQTE); Teacher World (residential camp); Teach in Nebraska (web site); support for Teacher Preparation programs to recruit and retain paraprofessionals and other nontraditional candidates into teacher education programs; and build State K-12 standards and assessment into preservice programs. A bilingual certification project has been developed to address the needs of an increasing population of non-English speaking students. Last year the State Board adopted a new endorsement that unifies early childhood and early childhood special education.

Nebraska's legislature has passed legislation to create a teacher education recruitment/scholarship program that is, as yet, unfunded.

c. Ensure that all paraprofessionals (excluding those working with parents or as translators) attain the qualifications stated in sections 1119(c) and (d) by the 2005-06 school year.

Nebraska currently does not have a system established for ensuring that all paraprofessionals are highly qualified. The activities that will be required to establish a system of records and reporting include:

- Define the requirements for acceptable formal state and local assessments that would appropriately assess competency in instructional reading, mathematics, and writing and pre-reading, pre-writing, and pre-mathematics.
 - Select a list of assessments that are appropriate for paraprofessionals.
 - Establish appropriate passing scores on selected standardized tests for paraprofessionals.
- Define the duties and categories of non-certificated personnel that would be required to meet these qualifications.
 - Develop State Board policy and Rules and requirements for certification of paraprofessionals.
- Establish a reporting system based on these requirements and develop rules and regulations.
- Restructure the teacher certification computer system or develop a new paraprofessional computer system that is connected to institutions of higher education for sharing information.
- Establish a monitoring system to review reports and check accuracy and quality of responses.
- Work with institutions of higher education, including community colleges, to ensure that training opportunities are available for currently employed paraprofessionals to achieve the required qualifications.

Proposed timeline:

2001-02 School Year

- Initial notification of Title I requirements for hiring new paraprofessionals.
 - March – Information included in a mailing to all districts that included a CD of P. L. 107-110.
 - April – Information on requirements for paraprofessionals presented to about 500 participants in the annual Spring Title I conferences.
 - May – Information included in Title I application packet.
 - August – Districts will be required to describe plan for paraprofessionals in the District Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement.
- When guidance is available on paraprofessional requirements, distribute guidance and provide technical assistance to districts on implementing it.

2002-03 School Year

- A Task Force of representatives of districts, organizations, community colleges, colleges and the university, Department and ESU staff will be created to address the requirements listed above.
- NDE will begin developing a Rule and Board Policy to incorporate the recommendations of the Task Force.
- NDE will begin designing a computer system to maintain records on paraprofessionals.
- Provide districts with the recommendations of the Task Force on appropriate assessments for hiring new paraprofessionals.
- Work with developers and providers to define a list of acceptable assessments.

2003-04 School Year

- Process the Rule for certification of paraprofessionals.
- Provide technical assistance and training to districts in reporting requirements.
- Complete the computer system for recording certification.
- Develop and implement a reporting system for districts.

Given the need to develop an entire system for the State of Nebraska for certifying qualified paraprofessionals, the earliest possible date for base line data is the Spring of 2004.

To ensure appropriate training opportunities are available for paraprofessionals to meet the new standards, the Department is:

- Reviewing a program for paraprofessional training already developed by the University of Nebraska – Lincoln that is currently being used primarily with paraprofessionals working in Special Education programs. This program includes

assessments and may be adapted as an option for State approved competency assessments as required in NCLBA.

- Reviewing the professional development training and courses already developed by local districts.
 - Research will be conducted to assess the paraprofessional training opportunities currently available in the state, with particular emphasis on opportunities at the community college level. Results of that research will be utilized for a statewide discussion with community colleges, other postsecondary institutions, and other stakeholders to establish a framework for paraprofessional training expectations.
 - There are several pilot projects in the state that are focused at encouraging individuals to consider entering the education profession as paraprofessionals or teachers. These projects are typically have as a focus on recruiting and retaining culturally diverse individuals, people of color, and other nontraditional populations. Examples of pilot projects include: working with the reservation school districts to encourage and support Native American paraprofessionals to enter the teaching force; developing easily accessible classes and support services for paraprofessionals; designing a model to prepare and support culturally diverse paraprofessionals in the more rural areas of our state. Model projects are for the most part being implemented on the local level and NDE will provide leadership for identifying models being used in the state and for disseminating information about the projects throughout the state for replication purposes.
- d. **Help LEAs with a high need for technology, high percentages or numbers of children in poverty, and low-performing schools to form partnerships with other LEAs, institutions of higher education, libraries, and other private and public profit and non-profit entities with technology expertise to improve the use of technology in instruction.**

The responses to Part II. Question 2 (7) and the State Technology Plan presented in Section 1 – Using Technology To Improve Achievement Theme of this plan identify the goals for technology use instruction and the use of both formula and competitive grants.

e. **Promote parental and community participation in schools.**

The State has designated Family/Parent Literacy and Involvement as a theme that is inherent in meeting each goal and activity of the Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement. State level activities include:

- Addressing the identified need to work with parents, communities, including business and industry, to become more informed and involved in understanding standards, assessment and accountability.
- Incorporating the theme of Family/Parent Literacy and Involvement in the District Comprehensive Plans for School Improvement to increase awareness and support efforts at the local level.

- Providing information through the media on parent involvement.
- Promoting and supporting the Family/Parent Literacy and Involvement through all programs including: (specific activities identified in Section 1 of this plan)
 - Early Childhood
 - Special Education
 - Career and Technical Education
 - All NCLB programs
 - The State's Parent Assistance Center (S.P.R.I.N.G)

The Title I, Part A program will be reviewing all existing guidance on parental involvement to ensure the changes of No Child Left Behind Act are addressed and included for future dissemination. Parent involvement requirements, including parent-compacts and policies, are reviewed regularly during the Integrated Site Reviews. Parental involvement requirements under Title I, Part A, will be described in the district Comprehensive Plans for School Improvement. The Department has provided written guidance, including sample parent-compacts, to districts and reviewed these requirements during the annual regional Spring Conferences and on-site visits. The requirements for annual reporting to parents of student performance on standards and reporting to the public of the school's performance and school improvement status is included in the guidance disseminated annually for the Title I Annual Performance Report. The State's annual State of the Schools report allows any individual to review and print a building's report card. Districts are encouraged to use these reports as part of their required annual reports to the public on student performance.

Community Involvement

As part of the efforts involved with State Goal 4: All schools and NDE will be learning organizations, the State Board of Education and the Department are annually conducting a series of Public Policy Forums across the state. These forums include broad representation of organizations, schools and community members with a focus on improving schools. The structured format of focus discussion groups allow input on a broad range of issues and topics around schools and schooling in the State. The responses are collected, analyzed and used to gain an understanding of the public's response to current practices and provide direction for future activities through identifying areas of need and support. Some of the results of the initial year's Public Policy Forums included:

- Strong support for the STARS assessment system and the capacity building professional development being provided in support of classroom-based performance assessment. The process has created invaluable "conversations" about learning and instruction as well as assessments.
- The need to use the data on student performance on the assessments to change instruction and curriculum, school practices and policies and organization.
- Students need to be connected and understand new process and benefits.
- A statewide data collection system for preschool through postsecondary (P-16) is needed.

- Parents and community members are supportive of their schools but need to be even more involved and informed. Higher Education needs to become more involved.
- A need for additional resources, including more time and money and more training opportunities for teachers and administrators.

f. Secure the baseline and follow-up data for the core ESEA accountability system described in Part I.

To adequately secure the baseline and follow-up data for the core ESEA accountability system, Nebraska will need to develop a new system for collecting data. Student performance on the STARS assessments of content standards has been collected at a “standard-level” and reported as an aggregate for each building. The quality of STARS assessments and norm-referenced test (NRT) data has been collected at the district level. Nebraska is working with several other states to develop a system design for a state level student data system which will meet the requirements of ESEA, IDEA and Carl Perkins. Nebraska does currently collect student level data on special education students, but it is not part of a comprehensive state system.

6. Describe how the State will –

a. SEA officials and staff consulted with the Governor’s office in the development of the State plan;

The purpose of the Comprehensive State Plan for School Improvement is to integrate and coordinate state, local and federal programs and activities to help all schools be high-performing. The Comprehensive State Plan for School Improvement is inclusive of all programs and activities of the Department of Education. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner meet monthly with the Governor to share information and progress on the development of this State Plan.

b. State officials and staff will coordinate the various ESEA-funded programs with State-level activities the State administers;

The Comprehensive State Plan for School Improvement is being developed and implemented by a Management Team comprised of Team Leaders representing Early Childhood (including the state’s Head Start-State Collaboration Office), Special Education, Higher Education and Adult Education, Professional Development, Technology, Data Center, Curriculum and Instruction, Career and Technical Education and all federal programs.

A Leadership Council position has been created to lead in the development and implementation of this plan. The person in this new position, Federal Programs Director, is responsible for coordinating improvement activities within the Department and overseeing the integration of federal programs as support for these activities.

The development of this plan is an example of collaborative work expected during the implementation of State-level activities resulting as the plan is implemented. Twelve “theme teams”, involving 60 staff from all across the Department, prepared the profile of school improvement efforts in Section 1 of this plan. Federal program directors and staff provided the No Child Left Behind program information. The goals were developed by the State Plan

Advisory Committee, the Committee of Practitioners, and over 50 members of the Department who participated in a Design Lab under Myron Kellnor-Rogers. The themes and target areas of the State plan were presented for input at five regional Title I meetings across the state attended by more than 500 teachers and administrators.

Specific Coordination activities planned include:

- Comprehensive District Improvement Plans – preliminary in October, 2002; final plans in October, 2003, that include consolidated federal programs plans.
- Defining a new role for cross-program teams of Department staff to assist and support districts as they develop their plans.
- Utilizing flexibility of NCLB (Transferability) to focus non-administrative federal resources to focus initially on:
 - Highly qualified staff in the area of Reading coordinating with institutions of higher education to provide endorsements and advanced degrees for this professional development
 - Leadership academies for administrators and recruitment of administrators
 - Initiating post-secondary training for paraprofessionals leading to associate degrees
- Consolidating federal program applications – 2003-04 school year.
- Integrating monitoring for federal programs (expand current process from 6 programs to all programs) - 2003-04 school year.
- Consolidating advisory groups into one Committee of Practitioners (March 2002) with separate advisory subgroups for Reading First, 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Migrant Education.
- Consolidating federal financial and progress reporting – by 2003-04
- Coordinating the Statewide School Support teams through the ESUs

c. State officials and staff will coordinate with other organizations, such as businesses, IHEs, nonprofit organizations; and

A State Plan Advisory Committee, representing a broad base of organizations and institutions including teachers and administrators, higher education, ESUs, community organizations and adult literacy providers, the ESEA Committee of Practitioners, Governor's office, state organizations (school boards, teachers and administrators) has been created to assist in development and oversight of the Comprehensive State Plan. The Advisory Committee has assisted with the development of this plan and will meet regularly to provide input into the direction of the activities and strategies to implement this plan. The broad base of representation on the Advisory Committee will assist in coordinating and integrating State, local, and federal activities for school improvement.

- d. **State officials and staff will coordinate with other organizations, including the Governor's office, and with other Federal programs (including those authorized by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Perkins vocational and Technical Education Act, the Head Start Act, the Adult Education and Literacy Act, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act).**

This is Nebraska's comprehensive plan for school improvement. As such, it includes all programs and activities within the Department that work directly with the districts of the State, including I.D.E.A., Perkins, Head Start, Adult Education and McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. All of the organizations and other Federal programs are represented on the Management Team and the State Plan Advisory Committee. The Committee of Practitioners has been expanded to include all federal programs included in this plan, including McKinney-Vento. The Title IV Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Project Director serves on the Management Team and the State Plan Advisory Committee. Two local Safe and Drug-Free School and Community project representatives serve on the Committee of Practitioners. The Committee of Practitioners met twice during the development of the plan to provide input and review the proposed plan. Although required to submit a separate State application, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance program is considered to be part of this Comprehensive State Plan for School Improvement.

7. **Describe the strategies the State will use to determine, on a regular basis, whether LEAs, schools, and other subgrantees are making satisfactory progress in meeting State and local goals and desired program outcomes. In doing so, the SEA should also describe how it will use data it gathers from subgrantees on how well they are meeting state performance targets, and the actions the State will take to determine or revise interventions for any LEAs, schools, and other subgrantees that are not making substantial progress.**

To determine whether LEAs, schools and other subgrantees are making satisfactory progress in meeting State and local goals and desired outcomes, the State will:

- a) Collect data related to student performance.
- Student performance on standards results on STARS is reported from all districts and schools through the annual State of the Schools and School Report Cards. For the State Report Card, districts submit the Total Reading and Total Mathematics results, by quartile in the four performance levels for the norm-referenced assessments required for accreditation under Rule 10. For the State of the Schools Report, districts submit student results on each standard for all students and for students receiving services in special education programs and English Language Learners.
 - The State of the Schools report provides State, district and building level data on student performance on each standard, the ratings on the technical quality of the assessments, student population demographics, teacher quality and qualifications, and district financial information (receipts and expenditures). The website is designed to produce building level report cards that districts can use to meet State accreditation requirements for annual reporting on student performance as well as ESEA school report card requirements.
 - Districts also submit an assessment portfolio that is reviewed by assessment experts from across the nation. The student performance results of the statewide writing

assessment are also collected by the State. All of these results will be incorporated into the state's definition of adequate yearly progress.

- The district's results on goals established for the comprehensive district plans will be integrated into these data collections. The anticipated date for an integrated collection of results on the goals of the district plans is for the 2003-04 school year.
 - Even Start objectives and Indicators of Quality, Success Markers and other relevant quality indicators and measurable progress will be reviewed to determine their complementarity and compatibility within the SEA system of review.
- b) Progress toward meeting the program requirements that are in addition to student performance will be collected through progress reports for each program.
- The Federal Programs Group within the Department will be analyzing the progress report requirements for each of the NCLB programs to determine how best to consolidate data collections so that districts are not required to submit multiple progress reports. The progress reports for NCLB programs should be integral to the District Comprehensive Plans for School Improvement.

Technical assistance and interventions for schools not making adequate yearly progress, known as IMPACT schools, will be available from the School Support Teams of the ESUs and the NDE cross-program teams. Technical assistance will include individual assistance for identified schools and regional meetings and scheduled workshops. It is the contention of the State that accountability for a school's performance rests with the local community. The State also recognizes that schools or communities may acknowledge circumstances when intervention from outside the community may be beneficial, or even necessary, to turning around a school that seems unable to help itself do so. The Management Team will be designing a process and procedure for any parent, community or board member, to request assistance and intervention by the State during the 2002-03 school year.

Part III. ESEA Key Programmatic Requirements and Fiscal Information

1. Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs

- a. Identify the amount of the reservation required in section 1003(a) for school improvement that the State will use for State-level activities and describe those activities.**

The SEA will reserve 2% (approximately \$715,000) of the funds from district grants for Title I IMPACT schools (schools identified under section 1116 as being in need of improvement). Of this amount, 5% (approximately \$35,000) can be used for State-level activities to support school improvement.

Priorities for State-level activities:

- Provide opportunities for all schoolwide principals and administrators to use the results of the initial peer review of schoolwide plans. Regional workshops will be provided in September, 2002. Staff from McREL and NDE will provide training in use of scientific based research in instruction, programs, and professional development. The Regional workshops will also include all existing and interested applicants for the Comprehensive School Reform grants and projects.
 - Continue the peer review process annually for all existing and newly eligible schoolwide projects.
 - Develop guidance and technical assistance for all ESEA projects and programs on the use of scientific based research in instruction, programs, and professional development.
 - Provide support for the Annual Parent Involvement Conference. This annual conference has strong support and involvement of parents and provides an avenue for information on helping parents and families be partners in the education of their children.
- b. For the 95% of the reservation in section 1003(a) that must be made available to LEAs, describe how the SEA will allocate funds to assist LEAs in complying with the school improvement, corrective action, and restructuring requirements of section 1116 and identify any SEA requirements for use of those funds.**

The 95% will be distributed to the IMPACT schools that have been identified as needing improvement for at least two years based on a weighted formula that provides:

- 50% of the weight on the relative size of the Title I participants in the Targeted Assisted or Schoolwide Project, and
- 50% on the number of students whose latest STARS assessment results indicate are performing below proficiency level on Reading and Mathematics assessments.

With the wide variance in size of schools in Nebraska, it is most equitable to use a formula that includes both size and number of students. For relative size, the following ranges of students will be used:

<u>Level</u>	<u>Students</u>
1	1- 10
2	11 – 25
3	26 – 50
4	51 – 100
5	101 – 200
6	201 plus

The schools receiving these school improvement funds must describe in their application the specific strategies and activities that are scientific research based and proven effective that will be provided to:

- raise the achievement level of students performing below mastery level on content standards in reading/language arts and mathematics;
- particularly address the performance needs of any subgroup population, if appropriate; and
- increase the capacity of teachers and paraprofessionals to provide appropriate instruction utilizing the results of student performance on STARS.

c. Identify what part, if any, of State administrative funds the SEA will use for assessment development under section 1004 of the ESEA, and describe how those funds will be used.

The amount of state administrative funds available for Title I, Part A for the 2002-03 school year have not increased since the reauthorization of 1994. However, with the consolidation of administrative funds, all federal program staff will be supporting the assessment development through providing technical assistance and information in the Integrated Site Reviews, conferences and other activities.

d. Describe how the State will inform LEAs of the procedures they must use to distribute funds for schools to use for supplemental services under section 1116(e)(6) and (7) and the procedures for determining the amount to be used for this purpose.

Guidance will be provided to all districts with schools eligible for supplemental services once Nebraska has received final guidance for implementing this component of the law from the U. S. Department of Education and when the State is notified if our alternate method can be used for calculating Title I, Part A grants. Nebraska has requested approval to use an alternate procedure for allocating Title I, Part A grants because the updated census data are not very accurate with the State's many very small school districts. The alternate method uses and average of census poverty data and the number of children eligible for free lunch under the Child Nutrition Program. If given permission to use the alternate method, Nebraska proposes to use the alternate data as the basis of determining this requirement.

Section 1116(e)(6) provides that each child shall have available the lesser of:

- a) The district's total grant divided by the number of children from families below the poverty level as used in the Title I, Part A grant calculations. Using the alternate data for poverty, the range of funds available for supplemental services on a sample of districts (large and small) would vary from \$650 to about \$1,000 per child.
- b) The actual costs of the supplemental educational services received by the child.

Section 1116(e)(7) allows, but does not mandate, a State to use funds reserved for State-level activities from Title I, Part A and Title V, Part A for supplemental services. Until the State has determined the extent and need for supplemental services and the capability of local districts to meet those needs within the requirements of Section (b)(10), the State does not plan to use the reserved funds for supplemental services.

The guidance being developed for districts that are required to provide supplemental services will address the notification requirements to parents including the process and procedures for accessing services and the agreements needed between the school, parents and providers. The guidance and the approved list of supplemental service providers will be available on the Department's homepage for access by any individual. Nebraska intends to utilize the information and toolkit being developed by the CCSSO (Council of Chief State School Officials) as a basis for information to districts.

e. Describe how the State will use the formula funds awarded under section 6113(b)(1) for the development and implementation of State assessments in accordance with section 6111.

In Nebraska's School-based Teacher-led Standards and Reporting System (STARS), classroom teachers and district assessment experts develop and implement the assessments used to measure student performance on standards. The funds awarded under section 6113(b)(1) will be used to support the accomplishment of the goals and performance indicators for State Goals (1) and (4) and NCLB goals (1) and (2).

Student Performance on Standards [State Goal 1 and 4, NCLB Goal 1]

The preliminary figures indicate Nebraska will receive 4.3 million dollars. Approximately 50% of these funds will be used to increase the capacity of districts, schools, ESUs and teachers in the development and use of classroom-based assessments through continuation of the STAR grants originally provided through Goals 2000 funds. During the 2000-01 school year, STAR grants enabled 6,873 participants to be trained in developing classroom assessments. This included:

- 3682 elementary teachers
- 2228 secondary teachers
- 460 special education teachers
- 503 curriculum specialists

The priorities for the STARS grants will be:

- to refine academic achievement standards and quality indicators for reading and mathematics following the initial year of testing in each subject area,

- the development of classroom assessments in the area of science,
- the continued articulation of knowledge and skills necessary in grades 3-8 for reaching standards established for grades 4 and 8 in reading and mathematics, and
- the refinement of district assessment systems to enable appropriate assessment of student performance on reading and mathematics standards in grades 3-8.

The process of becoming a learning organization (State Goal 4) requires the involvement of all personnel in a dialogue about the focus of the organization and the strategies and activities (the real work) to be conducted to define its goals and reach them. A learning organization is one that reflects on the processes being used and uses the information gained from this analysis to adjust work and responsibilities.

The STAR grants support schools becoming learning organizations. Research clearly demonstrates that successful schools are those where teachers regularly dialogue about their work and collaboratively evaluate their efforts. The “wrestling” with the standards to determine what specifically students must know and be able to do, the development of classroom-based assessments to measure student performance on standards and determine academic achievement standards for those assessments provide invaluable opportunities for teachers and administrators.

Approximately 20% of these funds will be used for

- technical assistance, from experts in classroom based performance assessments, to train the trainers within the ESUs,
- The ESU professional developers to work with classroom teachers on the development of STARS assessments.
- Continued work with the Buros Center for Testing to assure high technical quality of classroom-based assessments and district assessment systems.

English Language Learners [NCLB Goal 2]

Approximately 10% of the funds will be used to support the development of assessments under STARS for students for whom English is a Second Language to measure student performance in reading, writing, and mathematics. (See response to Part I. Question 1(k) for some activities and timelines.)

Accountability System

Approximately 20% of the funds will be used to support the State’s effort to design and implement a collecting and reporting system for the NCLB data requirements for determining adequate yearly progress. Proposed activities include:

- The Task Force to define AYP, minimum numbers, etc.
- Restructuring the State’s student performance results data collection system to meet the new requirements of No Child Left Behind.

2. Title I, Part B, Subpart 3 – Even Start Family Literacy

- a. Describe how the SEA will use its indicators of program quality to monitor, evaluate, and improve its projects, and to decide whether to continue operating them.

Processes have been developed to perform an annual data collection from each funded project (currently nine) concerning achievements on the Indicators of Quality. The data collected involves the achievement of both adults and children and of the learning environments provided in the Even Start projects. A matrix of instruments and timelines is included below. This annual monitoring of progress via written reports is augmented by biennial monitoring visits to the projects. As a part of such visits, interviews are conducted with staff and representative participant files are examined.

Projects are evaluated based on the data provided and on the on-site visits. Projects that do not show positive results for adults and children are required to develop an improvement plan which will be closely monitored. A project that is unwilling to develop and follow an improvement plan would be recommended to the State Board of Education for termination.

Nebraska requires the use of “Success Markers” to inform program quality and planning efforts in each of the program areas (child development, parenting, adult education). Electronic copy is available from Kirkland@nde.state.ne.us. When initially developed, the indicators of program quality were reviewed by the Committee of Practitioners and will be brought back to the Committee when revisions are appropriate or needed.

Nebraska's Even Start and Early Childhood Programs Evaluation Matrix

Measure	Purpose	Status	Approved Tools	Timing of Admin.	Reported to NDE
A. Program Environment Measures	Inform program improvement	Required	Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS Revised; ITERS; FDCRS) Program Quality Assessment (High/Scope)	Baseline: Spring 2002-existing programs Fall 2002-new programs At least annually, thereafter	Annually with final financial report
B.1.Child Assessment	Plan learning activities for each child; assess child progress	Required	Child Observation Record (Ages 2-6) (High/Scope) Infant Toddler Child Observation Record (High/Scope) Work Sampling System (Ages 3-10)	As recommended by instrument manual	Annually with final financial report
B.2. Language/Literacy*	Document program effectiveness	Required as of 2003-04	IGDIs (tentative) TERA (tentative)	To be determined	Annually with final financial report beginning in 2004
B.2. Long-term Outcomes	Program effectiveness	Required	District's Standardized Assessment	As administered by district	Annually with final financial report for 4 th and 6 th graders disaggregated by ECP participants

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B.3. Screening at Program Entrance	Identify children requiring additional evaluation for special services	Optional	Recommended instruments: Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ)-Second Edition Denver Developmental Screening Test (2 weeks to 6 years) Early Screening Inventory, Revised First Step: Screening Test for Evaluating Preschoolers	As needed	No requirement to report
C. Success Markers	Monitor overall progress in meeting goals.	Required	Markers as developed by NE programs	Fall and spring	Annually with final financial report
D. National Accreditation	Document program quality; assure family input into program goals and operation	Required for center-based programs	NAEYC Accreditation	Yr 1-Acquire Self Study Materials Year 2-Initiate process Yr 3-Achieve accreditation Yr 4 + -Maintain	Report status in annual final report
E. Journey Mapping	Document progress of families in meeting goals	Optional (except for ESU #15)	Journey Mapping Process as developed through PIRE (contact ECTC for training/support)	Spring	If used, annually with final financial report

* Program children and a control group entering kindergarten will be assessed at the beginning of the kindergarten year. The instruments listed are those being used in the Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Grant. More information about this aspect of the evaluation process will be forthcoming. (New 4-02)

b. Describe what constitutes sufficient program progress when the SEA makes continuation awards.

Sufficient program progress includes:

- 1) a demonstration that all required program elements are being provided;
- 2) evidence that the required data collection is complete;
- 3) timely submission of the data; and
- 4) data that demonstrates that participants are making progress according to the Indicators of Quality.

c. Explain how the State's Even Start projects will provide assistance to low-income families participating in the program to help children in those families to achieve to the applicable State content and student achievement standards.

The chief purpose of Even Start projects is to assure that children of participating families enter school prepared to achieve the state's standards. Each Nebraska Even Start project accomplishes this by offering all of the required Even Start program elements in the highest quality possible given the available resources. The state's Indicators of Quality assure that the projects are accomplishing their mission.

Local Even Start programs are provided updates regarding content standards, particularly those in area of reading. Local Even Start programs are also encouraged to review information and dialogue with their staff, parents, and local community partners to enhance awareness regarding content standards and ways they may support the learning and literacy needs of young children. Parents are encouraged to discuss progress with their children's teachers and school district administrators.

d. Identify the amount of the reservation under subsection 1233(a) that the State will use for each category of State-level activities listed in that section, and describe how the SEA will carry out those activities.

The Nebraska Department of Education reserves not more than a total of six percent of the Even Start grant funds for the costs of administration (no more than three percent) and the balance for technical assistance and program improvement. The Even Start program director (assigned at .4 FTE) also serves as the Director of the Head Start State Collaboration Office which facilitates collaboration between Even Start and Head Start at the local level.

Training and technical assistance is accomplished through sub grants to the Early Childhood Training Center and to Meyer Rehabilitation Center at the University of Nebraska for program evaluation.

3. Title I, Part C -- Education of Migrant Children

a. Describe the process the State will use to develop, implement, and document a comprehensive needs assessment that identifies the special educational and related needs of migrant children.

The annual application and the collaborative role the Nebraska Migrant Education Program in the development of the new District Comprehensive Plans for School Improvement, will include a description of the districts' efforts to ensure:

- 1) eligible migrant students who are served will meet challenging state standards;
- 2) coordination between state and local agencies as well as between other programs funded under NCLB will occur;
- 3) procedures for the identification and recruitment will be completed; and
- 4) procedures that will be used for the transfer of migrant student records.

Staff development is provided on a monthly basis to migrant educators and service providers on conducting and completing the needs assessments, assessing student language proficiency and determining students' proficiency in meeting state standards. Staff development materials include: 1) training sessions, 2) handouts, and, 3) collaboration activities. These sessions and materials were used to train educators, recruiters, community members, agribusiness staff, and health service providers on the comprehensive needs assessment process. The monthly meetings address staff development and other aspects as needed.

Multiple Approaches to the Assessment of Migrant Student Needs

The main approaches to assessing migrant students needs include:

- Assessment of Achievement of High Content Standards – The most recent normed tests and other assessment tools will be used to determine the extent to which migrant students have achieved high content standards.
- Assessment of Language Proficiency-Rubric-based checklists and standardized assessments of oral and written language (including the LAS, the Language Assessment Scales) will be used to determine student language proficiency in listening, comprehension, speaking, reading and writing.
- Broad-based Constituency Focus Groups – the Migrant Committee of Practitioners is a focus group that includes parents, the MEP Parent Advisory Board, community members, administrators, education legislators, and services providers. The Committee reviews the all MEP functions and recommends the subgrantee formula.
- Determination of the Number of Preschool Children – agri-business staff and MEP recruiters, in collaboration with schools, social services agencies, and other service providers will document on Certificates of Eligibility the number of migrant-eligible preschool aged children.
- Determination of the Number/Percentage of Out-of-School Youth – Effective Schools Survey Results, School Status and Improvement Reports, and School District Reports will be used in addition to the recruiters' reports, interviews with school personnel and documentation of information conversations with employers and service provides to determine the eligible migrant out-of-school youth population.
- Needs Assessment Surveys – An annual survey is completed by educators, administrators, service provides, employers, recruiters, and others familiar with the migrant student population to determine the needs of students and service providers in their assigned recruitment areas which includes all 93 Nebraska counties.

Procedures Used for Identified Migrant Students and Conducting a Comprehensive Assessment of Needs:

- Develop State program goals aligned with the results of the comprehensive needs assessment.
- Determine the formula for allocating funds to follow identified needs based on the Nebraska State service priorities as recommended by the MEP Committee Practitioners subgroup on allocations.
- Allocate funds to local Operating Agencies (LOA) whose applications have been approved by the SEA.
- Monitor programs to ensure that the design and delivery of services/programs are consistent with SEA Migrant Education Program goals and the plans for services outlined in the Local Operating Agency application.

- Utilize the On-Site Monitor Reports for program evaluation and aligned with the goals of the MEP.
- Communication information about the MEP includes:
 - Project Newsletters
 - Agri-business Partnerships
 - MIS2000 State Website
 - Family Learning Centers
 - State Colleges & University Collaboration Projects
 - CAIR Consortium Activities
 - Nebraska Assoc. of Farmworkers
 - Family Learning Video Series
 - Mex.-American Teachers Project
 - Mexican Consulate's Office

b. Describe the State's priorities for the use of migrant education program funds in order to have migrant students meet the State's performance targets for indicators 1.1 and 1.2 in Part I (as well as 5.1 and 5.2 that expressly include migrant students), and how they relate to the State's assessment of needs for services.

Nebraska's Migrant Education Needs Assessment Survey Results:

LOAs' surveys and questionnaires are utilized to determine the areas of greatest need and concern in FY 2002-2003. Respondents from the LOAs included ESL teachers, migrant education staff, general classroom teachers, administrators, the MEP Director, migrant education recruiters, tutors, resource teachers, Head Start teachers and nurses and others as available.

Need was documented by student/family needs, assessment data, grades, school/health records, observation of students/families, Certificates of Eligibility and lists of students who qualify for migrant education, lists of English language learners, a locally-developed database of information, housing needs/histories, employment history, medical information, mental health services accessed and Head Start enrollment and agribusiness information.

Respondents rank ordered a list of program areas they felt important to provide to migrant students based on assessed needs. For the 2003 assessment the following format will be utilized:

Exhibit 1: Needs Assessment Results

Program Area	N	High (%)	Medium (%)	Low (%)	Mean
English Language Instruction	-	-	-	-	-
Language Arts/Reading Instruction	-	-	-	-	-
Math Instruction	-	-	-	-	-
Early Childhood Education	-	-	-	-	-
Vocational Skill Training	-	-	-	-	-
Technology Training	-	-	-	-	-
Health screening/services	-	-	-	-	-
Professional Development	-	-	-	-	-

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Curriculum Development	-	-	-	-	-
Instructional Strategies for ELLs	-	-	-	-	-
Collaboration to Increase Resources	-	-	-	-	-
Adult Literacy					
Home/School/Community Involvement					

This format will readily indicate priority services for migrant students. Instruction to improve English language proficiency has been the number one priority and increases annually as the number of migrant students increase.

The migrant project works in collaboration with State Colleges and Universities to provide migrant staff and others working with migrant students with training on instructional strategies for English language learners. Reading instruction is integrated into the ESL classes.

- c. Describe how the State will determine the amount of any subgrants the State will award to local operating agencies, taking into account the numbers and needs of migrant children, the statutory priority for service in section 1304(d), and the availability of funds from other federal, State, and local programs. (Applicable only if not previously addressed in Part II, #2.)**

Priority Use of Migrant Education Funds:

Needs expressed by LOAs included the following:

- 1) the development of English language proficiency in students;
- 2) teacher training in effective instructional strategies to increase the academic performance of students and,
- 3) increased performance level of students in reading through more instructional time.

These priorities will receive the greatest funding from the Migrant Education Program budget subawarded to each of the Complexes. All three priorities support literacy enhancement with reading skills development central to these efforts. In determining the amount of subgrants, the State will take into account the following funding factors: 1) numbers of migratory children, 2) the needs of migratory children, 3) the priority of services of these children under subsection 1304(d) and 4) the availability of funds from other programs. The State will submit a description to U. S. D. E, by September 1, 2002, of how, as a process and a timeline, these factors will be weighted and included in the State's determination of subgrants.

2002-2003 ALLOCATION FORMULA:

- # of interrupted participating students X \$350
- # of interrupted non-participating students X \$100
- # of uninterrupted participating students X \$250
- # of uninterrupted non-participating students X \$50
- \$300 for full-day summer school participation
- \$150 for ½-day summer school participation or less

YEAR GRANT COMPUTED ON THE AUGUST 31, 2001 COUNTS SUBMITTED IS:

XXX	X	\$350.00 (interrupted & participating) =	\$ X.00
XXX	X	\$100.00 (interrupted & non-participating)=	X.00
XXX	X	\$250.00 (uninterrupted & participating)=	X.00
XXX	X	\$50.00 (uninterrupted & non-participating)=	X.00
XXX	X	\$150.00/\$300.00 (½-day/full-day summer) =	<u>X.00</u>
TOTAL GRANT			<u>\$XXX.00</u>

d. Describe how the State will promote continuity of education and the interstate and intrastate coordination of services for migrant children.

The continuity of inter- and intra- educational services to migrant students is of top priority. The timely transfer of Migrant Student Records is a GOAL/priority of the Migrant Office. This includes:

- the MIS2000 System which allows unique reports issued to LOAs on a monthly basis.
- Timely records are effective ONLY through quality recruitment. In Nebraska this includes:
 1. Statewide recruitment with a Recruiter assigned to each of the 93 counties.
 2. Agribusiness ID & R Partnership Recruiting to identify, interview and enroll families/children immediately on arrival.
 3. COEs are completed, signed and dated by the recruiter, reviewed, initialed and dated by the project director, and submitted to the Department of Education's migrant office weekly. After a quality review/check, the COEs are signed and dated by the state director and immediately forwarded to the MIS2000 operators (one state supervisor and three regional operators).
 4. MIS2000 system operators provide the second quality review/check before entering data into the system. After entry on the MIS2000 System, which indicates the date entered (dates from the time of the interview to entry on the MIS2000 database are NOT TO EXCEED 7 days), data is immediately accessible to all Nebraska projects. Summer of 2002 is projected for record transfer among the MIS2000 States (approximately 28 states). During the Spring of 2002, part-time staff will be employed to provide weekly reports to all State Migrant Directors of families/children arriving in Nebraska from their respective state.

Quality of Recruitment, Enrollment and Transferring Records is assured and monitored by the State Migrant Office.

The SEA will maintain student information through the MIS2000 System to maintain records and student information and to transfer records. The system has been in operation for 4 years and provides unique reports as necessary for LOAs and the State. This student management profiling system allows the District to monitor changes in student status that includes information about their dropping out of school, re-enrolling at a new site, monitoring health records and services accessed, demographic information and specific information pertaining to the Certificate of Eligibility. It also provides the receiving school district with valuable student education information that can be accessed electronically upon the immediate enrollment by the student, thus minimizing any lost time with academic pursuits by the student. MSI2000 allows teachers to understand the needs of the students, the previous standards and benchmarks the student is working on and/or has mastered and provides a direct link to the previous teacher should access be needed or warranted. The system and reports are annually evaluated and updated.

Nebraska participates as one of 29 states in CAIR and one of 12 that participate in MECCA. The Consortium Arrangement for Identification and Recruitment—Building Partnerships with Agribusiness and Migrant Education (CAIR) was formed with the overarching purpose of developing migrant education models for intra- and interstate identification and recruitment contacts, procedures, and programs. The aim of CAIR is to share resources and expertise, thereby reducing administrative costs and program functions costs for State programs and to make more funds available for direct services to migrant students. MECCA provides many opportunities for distance learning, etc. strategies for direct services.

The goals for CAIR and MECCA are to assist Nebraska to: 1) Develop, refine, conduct, and disseminate successful model practices, strategies, and techniques for the identification and recruitment of migrant children; 2) Identify and disseminate exemplary educational and/or supportive services models for migrant children and families; and, 3) Maximize the value of partnerships. Through the collaborative efforts of the many states involved interstate coordination is accomplished.

To accomplish secondary credit and accrued and dropout prevention, the SEA Migrant Education Program utilizes and promotes the national Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS) program. PASS serves as a viable credit accrual option to assist migrant youth to successfully complete secondary education. This nationally recognized program offers mobile secondary students an alternative means of earning full/partial course credits to motivate students to seek graduation. PASS students work semi-independently or with the assistance of a mentor. The PASS curriculum consists of learner-centered materials that include current teaching techniques to assist the learner. Students can undertake courses at their own pace; but courses are completely-aligned with Nebraska State Standards and are very comprehensive. The PASS program promotes the continuity of education for mobile students and allows for the interstate and intrastate coordination of services. Nebraska is presently developing two PASS Geography courses. These are: 1) Cultural Geography and, 2) Economic Geography.

e. Describe the State's plan to evaluate the effectiveness of its migrant education program and projects.

The SEA Migrant Education Program will conduct each year an evaluation to assess the effectiveness of its migrant education program and its projects. Specifically, the evaluation is intended to satisfy the three areas: 1) the progress of the State project towards achieving the State Standards and proposed performance indicators; 2) the effectiveness of the project in

meeting the overall purpose of the program; and, 3) the extent to which the identified needs as determined by the assessment of needs have been addressed by the LOA.

The SEA views the evaluation process as an essential factor contributing to its continued success in providing for the needs of migrant children and families. Effective management and high quality services require frequent feedback to document progress, detect problem areas, and revise goals. The evaluation plan utilizes SEA monitoring plan and refines the program services and processes. The assessment process includes: 1) SEA on-site visits to project sites, 2) the completion of the U.S. Department of Education's Performance Report of data collection and other comparison data.

The SEA proposes to use a MEP Project Performance Evaluation Plan that examines the objectives and expected performance indicators that serve migrant students on both the State and project level. The annual evaluation under the direction of the MEP Director, will provide program effectiveness assessment that include the following:

- Procedural Assessment: Program activities and MEP management procedures. This will be done at the monthly review with the staff and monitoring visits to the sites, including classroom observations and feedback from the State's monthly meetings.
- Summative Assessment: The Director of MEP will generate a quarterly report that summarizes the activities implemented in working toward achieving project goals, objectives and performance indicators.
- Longitudinal Study: A critical analysis to assess the extent of impact the program has had on its participants will be conducted.

Annually, the Director of MEP will utilize the evaluation information compiled to make decisions for program improvement and to submit reports to District Superintendents. Furthermore, the SEA will assist the LOAs by providing the information necessary to prepare fiscal reports and budget information in accordance with federal and state regulations.

Evaluation assessments will include:

- Student Recruitment Effort/MIS2000 reports
 - Student Academic Assessment Information/State Standards Desegregation Reports
 - LOA Student Information/MIS2000 One-Page Transfer Records
 - Effective Use of MEP Funds/Family Learning Centers
 - Benefits of Agribusiness Partners
- f. **Identify the amount of funds that the SEA will retain from its Migrant Education Program (MEP) allocation, under section 200.41 of the Title I regulations (34 CFR 200.41), to carry out administrative and program functions that are unique to the MEP, and describe how the SEA will use those funds.**

- The SEA will retain the amount of \$175,000.00 to carry out administrative and program functions unique to MEP. The use of these funds include the salaries of the MEP Director – 1 FTE and MEP Secretary – 1 FTE and benefits (Retirement, FICA, Life, Health insurance, etc.), and usual operating costs.

4. Title I, Part D -- Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk

- a. Describe the program goals, performance indicators, performance objectives, and data sources that the State has established for its use in assessing the effectiveness of the program in improving the academic and vocational and technical skills of students participating in the program.**

Children and youth who are neglected, delinquent, or at-risk will be held to the same expectations for student performance on standards as all students in the State. As the State establishes performance objectives for the performance indicators for State goal number 1 (identified in Part 1 of this plan), students served in Title I, Part D programs will be included. Nebraska's performance indicators specifically include the vocational and technical skills under Career and Technical Education. Due to the temporary nature of the educational services while in State agencies for neglected or delinquent or in residential settings in local educational agencies, the responsibility for assessment of student performance on content standards is a joint responsibility between the agency providing the educational services and the resident district of the student. The State is in the process of developing new regulations regarding the education of children who are wards of the court or the state in out-of-home placements. These regulations would require each institution and agency to designate a school liaison to coordinate assessments, records and academic accomplishments resulting in high school credits toward graduation.

Each State agency receiving Title I, Part D funds is required to maintain records to track the effectiveness of the services provided in helping students' improvement of academic and vocational and technical skills. These records include performance and completion of courses, attainment of a GED, if appropriate, and growth toward meeting academic goals.

- b. Describe how the SEA is assisting projects funded under the program in facilitating the transition of youth from correctional facilities to locally operated programs.**

The Department of Education leads and supports a Multi-Agency Task Force that meets monthly to coordinate services to children and youth in out-of-home placements. The Task Force includes representatives of the State agencies, the local residential agencies, school districts, private providers and other state agencies such as Health and Human Services (HHS). The Task Force has developed a guide and protocol for case managers and parole and probation officers and school district personnel to assist in the transition of youth between agencies and locations. The guide has been distributed to all districts and is used for training of personnel in Health and Human Services.

The Task Force continues to study and explore methods to better coordinate transition for children and youth.

- c. Describe how the funds reserved under section 1418 will be used for transition services for students leaving institutions for schools served by LEAs, or postsecondary institutions or vocational and technical training programs.**

The transition of youth to locally operated programs is one of the required activities for the Title I, Part D funds provided to the State agencies. Each State agency must describe in their plan the amount of funds to be reserved for transitional activities and the activities to be funded. Previously supported activities included staff to assist with mainstreaming students into the regular school system; providing personal, vocational and technical and academic counseling; and assisting with job placement services.

5. *Title I, Part F -- Comprehensive School Reform*

a. Describe the process the State educational agency will use to ensure that programs funded include and integrate all eleven required components of a comprehensive school reform program.

Nebraska will ensure that programs that are funded will include all eleven components through education of potential grantees during the process of providing information about the grant opportunity and application process, through requirements in applications and the process of review through the use of a common rubric, through technical assistance provided by the Nebraska Department of Education and our colleagues at McREL, and through the annual review activities. As new guidelines for the CSR program are written prior to our next grant cycle, a considerable effort will be given to the integration of the two new required components.

In September of 2002, the Department of Education and staff from McREL will provide a series of regional workshops for principals of Comprehensive School Reform projects, existing schoolwide projects, and newly eligible schools planning to become schoolwide projects. These workshops will focus on using scientific research based services, programs, instruction and professional development to improve the achievement of all children.

b. Describe the process the State will use to determine the percentage of Comprehensive School Reform schools with increasing numbers of students meeting or exceeding the proficient level of performance on State assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics.

Nebraska will use the STARS (School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System) to monitor CSR schools to determine progress of goals to increase the numbers of students meeting or exceeding the proficient level of performance.

Additionally, CSR schools will report data on any norm-referenced measurements that the may have used, as well as assessment data derived from assessments provided by external service providers. NDE will track this data to determine increases in performance by CSR schools.

Using pre-grant student performance data as baseline information, schools will annually compare achievement statistics with the initial levels of performance. Nebraska Department of Education will track each project's increases in percentage of students meeting or exceeding the proficient level of performance in reading/language arts and mathematics.

6. *Title II, Part A -- Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund*

a. If not fully addressed in the State's response to the information on performance goals, indicators, and targets in Part I describe the remainder of the State's annual measurable objectives under section 1119(a)(2).

- b. Describe how the SEA will hold LEAs accountable both for (1) meeting the annual measurable objectives described in section 1119(a)(2) of the ESEA, and (2) ensuring that the professional development the LEAs offer their teachers and other instructional staff is consistent with the definition of “professional development” in section 9101(34).

Note: This program, and the financial support it provides to States, LEAs, and schools, is vitally important to ensure that all students have teachers who are highly qualified, and who can help students achieve to their maximum capabilities. The two items identified above supplement other information States need to provide in response to items in Part I, Goal 3; Part II, item 5, and Part III, information on Title II, Part D (Enhancing Education Through Technology program) on how they plan to implement key teacher quality activities.

The NDE has provided all potential applicants for Title II funds with information related to the definition of professional development as cited in section 9101(34). The text of the law dealing with that issue has been placed on the agency's web site and is highlighted in its discussion area. In addition, educators attending regional meetings held by the agency's Title I program during the spring of 2002 had the opportunity to discuss technical points concerning the matter with staff members from that section.

The NDE draws upon its partnership with the eighteen educational service units in the state to direct staff development activities that occur in school districts. Professional development personnel at the service units conduct training programs for schools and help guide local decision-makers in their selection of locally financed workshops. The NDE has established strong links to the service units by helping their staff members gain the capacity to implement high quality training programs. NDE staff members regularly attend organizational meetings held for service unit personnel and coordinate statewide staff development efforts through the group. The NDE will draw upon its relationship and contacts with professional development staff from the service units to ensure that school administrators understand the implications of the NCLB legislation relating to professional development activities supported with Title II funds.

In addition, staff from the Mid-Continent Regional Laboratory have provided service unit personnel with information about the “Research into Practice” series and will continue to conduct training sessions on the program in the future. Such experiences have been designed to build a focus on using validated training activities.

The State has also promoted the use of quality training programs by establishing a set of standards for professional development. The Nebraska Quality Indicators of Effective Staff Development, created in 1997-98, contains a comprehensive listing of benchmarks that direct training activities in schools. The guidelines have become part of the materials schools refer to when working with the State's academic standards program. And as such, act as a monitoring control mechanism when schools are reviewed under that system.

Based on those indicators, the State Board of Education has adopted a policy promoting effective professional development. It directs schools to use training resources in ways that will successfully improve the quality of education practices. That policy, the Quality Indicators and other components in the State's Approval & Accreditation process will be used to review training activities that occur in schools and ensure they meet the intent of the Law.

Title II of the Higher Education Act provided a state grant to NDE that has provided funds for a three-year period for a project entitled Nebraska Partnership for Quality Teacher Education. These funds are being used to develop and implement recruitment tools designed to attract minority candidates to teacher education. The project is also funding evaluation of an existing mentor teacher program and development of a database on teacher recruitment and retention.

A task force is currently completing work on development of an Alternative Certificate model which, if adopted, may help to attract potentially highly qualified teachers to school districts with teacher shortages or are located in remote geographic areas. It is anticipated that Title II, Part A funds will be used to implement this program which is designed for candidates to ultimately qualify for full licensure.

Nebraska currently has a high percentage of highly qualified teachers teaching all instructional units to students in Nebraska's public schools. Baseline teacher quality data from the 2000-2001 school year indicated that the following percentage of courses taught by teachers who majored in the subject area that they were teaching.

Language Arts	86.5%
Mathematics	95.8%
Social Studies	91.0%
Science	83.5%
Foreign Language	87.4%
Vocational Education	90.4%
Health & Physical Education	96.1%
Visual & Performing Arts	94.4%

These data demonstrate that a very high percentage of Nebraska students are taught by highly qualified teachers. However, a working committee will be formed to identify the most feasible ways to ensure that professional development opportunities are available to assist those teachers who are not currently meeting the standard of highly qualified teachers.

This committee will also discuss ways to provide professional development opportunities to increase the availability of school leaders (principals and superintendents) who have the knowledge and skill to provide leadership in assessment and evaluation of instruction for all students.

- c. Describe the State Educational Agency and the State Agency for Higher Education's agreement on the amount each will retain under section 2113(d) of ESEA. Section 2113(d) allows for one percent of the State's program allocation for administration and planning costs.**

The Department of Education and the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education have agreed to apportion the funds so that the Coordinating Commission will receive at least the same amount of administrative funds as was available under the Eisenhower Professional Development Program last year.

7. Title II, Part D -- Enhanced Education Through Technology

- a. Describe the program goals, performance indicators, performance objectives, and data sources that the State has established for its use in assessing the effectiveness of**

- the program in improving access to and use of educational technology by students and teachers in support of academic achievement.
- b. **Provide a brief summary of the SEA's long-term strategies for improving student academic achievement, including technology literacy, through the effective use of technology in the classroom, and the capacity of teachers to integrate technology effectively into curricula and instruction.**
 - c. **Describe key activities that the SEA will conduct or sponsor with the funds it retains at the State level. These may include such activities as provision of distance learning in rigorous academic courses or curricula; the establishment or support of public-private initiatives for the acquisition of technology by high-need LEAs; and the development of performance measurement systems to determine the effectiveness of educational technology programs.**
 - d. **Provide a brief description of how –**
 - **The SEA will ensure that students and teachers, particularly those in the schools of high-need LEAs, have increased access to technology, and**
 - **The SEA will coordinate the application and award process for State discretionary grant and formula grant funds under this program.**

The sole purpose of Title II, Part D- Enhanced Education Through Technology in Nebraska's Consolidated Plan is to facilitate and enhance learning for all students. The objectives, strategies, and activities that follow are related to and address the three goals of Title II, Part D. Those goals are: to improve student academic achievement through the use of technology in elementary and secondary schools; to assist every student in crossing the digital divide by ensuring that every student is technologically literate by the time the student finishes the eighth grade, regardless of the student's race ethnicity, gender, family income, geographic location or disability; and to encourage the effective integration of technology resources and systems with teacher training and curriculum development to establish research-based instructional methods that can be widely implemented as best practices by state educational agencies and local educational agencies.

The first objective is to establish and implement a technology based data and information management system that includes a template or model and process that correlates with, facilitates and enhances the Nebraska School Improvement Model. The following strategies are associated with this objective:

1. This template and the data and information it provides, when used by schools, will provide the basis for identifying the student performance levels within schools in all disciplines based on the goals set by each local school district and or learning center.
2. The electronic management system (model and template) will be used to bridge the gap between data and information collection, aggregation and reporting to intervention for improving instruction and increased student achievement at the local district level.
3. The electronically managed data and information will be used to identify schools with performance challenges and provide intervention strategies to assist in resolving their challenges.
4. The template or model will be designed so the required school district technology plans are integrated into the school improvement plans and submitted electronically.

5. Align the provisions of the technology based data and information management system with the provisions of the newly developed Nebraska School Improvement/Technology Plan.

Activities that the Nebraska Department of Education will finance with the use of the funds retained at the state level associated with this first objective include the following:

- Meet and collaborate with representatives from schools, regional service agencies, higher education, and the state department to research and design the electronic data and information management template/ model and process and align it with the Nebraska School Improvement Model.
- Create or identify existing software that will accommodate the electronic delivery of school improvement/ technology plans to the Nebraska Department of Education
- Assist in providing the infrastructure, hardware and software to all regional service agencies, schools and department staff so no barriers exist in the implementation of the new model and processes.
- Establish a statewide training program for all Nebraska Department of Education, regional service agencies and school staff to insure implementation of the new model and process.
- Work with the Nebraska teacher preparation institutions to ensure the new model and system and technology are infused in the administrator and teacher preparation programs.
- Provide assistance to high need schools in preparing applications for federal funds by using the services of intermediate service agencies and the well developed distance learning and Internet infrastructure.
- Use federal funds to assist in the forming of partnerships with low performing high need schools, intermediate service agencies, libraries and other public for profit and non-profit entities to improve the use of technology instruction.
- Continue to provide needed funding to schools so all students have access to quality teaching and learning through the well developed distance learning and Internet infrastructure. This includes computers, software, instructional resources, training of qualified teachers and connections to infrastructure networks.

The second objective is to facilitate and enhance teaching and increase student performance with the use of technology and align it with the Nebraska School Improvement Plan (template and model). The following strategies are associated with this objective:

1. Identify school technology infrastructure, hardware and software needs as they relate to school improvement and increase student performance and help provide for acquisition.
2. Provide for the delivery of and access to educational resources and instruction that will enhance and facilitate student learning for all schools and students.

3. Promote the infusion of student technology standards (Nebraska Technology Essential Learnings for Students) in all Nebraska schools and their curriculum in grades P-12.
4. Align all resources and curriculum with Nebraska standards and essential learnings.
5. Develop, identify and provide access to staff development using technology to improve teaching that will enhance student performance
6. Promote the infusion of the Nebraska Teacher Technology Competencies in teacher inservice and preservice staff development programs.
7. Promote the infusion of Nebraska Administrator Technology Competencies in administrator inservice and preservice staff development programs.

Activities that the Nebraska Department of Education will conduct or sponsor with the funds it retains at the state level to support the second objective, and strategies include the following:

- Use the newly developed School Improvement/ Technology Plan, electronically submitted by schools, to collect an infrastructure, hardware and software inventory and to identify how technology is used effectively in instruction.
- Provide consulting and leadership services to schools related to staff development, infrastructure and hardware planning and installation and disbursement of all grant funds state and federal.
- Provide the vehicle and services to insure that all resources and curriculum content are aligned with Nebraska standards and essential learnings.
- Provide consulting and leadership services to infuse the Nebraska Student Essential Learnings in Technology, the Nebraska Educator Technology Competencies and the Nebraska Administrator Technology Competencies into all schools through inservice and preservice training.
- Establish an on-line, on-demand classroom instructional resource portal accessible to all teachers.
- Develop, identify and provide access to staff development via technology to improve teaching that will enhance student performance.

Objective three will provide evidence that shows student will be able to function successfully in society with their knowledge and use of technology and that student achievement and school improvement will be enhanced through the use of technology. The following strategies are identified to help carry out objective three:

1. The Nebraska Technology Essential Learnings for Students will be used as the base for developing criteria for measuring the success of students in learning how

to function successfully in our society. One measurement will be taken during the 8th grade and than again during the 12th grade.

2. The data and information compiled, aggregated and reported by each school and or learning center based on the electronic School Improvement/ Technology Management Model will be used as the source for measuring student achievement and school improvement resulting from the use of technology in teaching and learning.

Activities that the Nebraska Department of Education will finance with the use of the funds retained at the state level associated with this third goal include the following:

- Provide leadership and services to insure that the Nebraska Technology Essential Learnings for Students are infused throughout the curriculum in all schools.
- Develop assessment instruments and processes to measure student achievement in the Student Essential Learnings in Technology at the specified grade levels.
- Implement the assessment process to measure student achievement in the Student Essential Learnings in Technology. It is possible that this process may be part of the annual reporting as aligned with the School Improvement/ Technology Management Model required of schools.
- Incorporate into the School Improvement/ Technology Management Model the information and data related to technology use and student assessment that will contribute to the measuring the level of success.
- Contract with the University of Nebraska- Lincoln to develop an assessment process that will correlate student performance in all disciplines at the district (LEA) level with the utilization of technology in teaching and learning as collected on the electronic School Improvement / Technology Model management system. The development of this assessment process will provide the mechanism to assess the effectiveness of technology as it relates to student performance in schools. The frequency of and applicable grade levels of the assessment will be correlated with the process, including timeline, specified in the Nebraska School Improvement/ Technology Model.
- Develop a comprehensive school assessment process and instrument that will provide needed data and information related to technology in schools. This may be based on the CEO Forum criteria or other reputable formats.

8. *Title III, Part A -- English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement*

- a. **Describe how the SEA will ensure that LEAs use program funds only to carry out activities that reflect scientifically based research on the education of limited English proficient children while allowing LEAs flexibility (to the extent permitted under State law) to select and implement such activities in a manner that the grantees determine best reflects local needs and circumstances.**

The SEA, under guidance provided by the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) and the National Clearinghouse, will identify program models that reflect scientifically based research on the education of ELL children. The SEA will post such scientifically based research models on the NDE home page. In addition, training will be provided to school districts to familiarize them with these models and effective ways to implement the models. School districts will have the flexibility to choose among the models that best serve their student population and the resources available to meet their needs.

In submitting the consolidated application, LEAs will be required to describe the models/programs currently used and how they will adopt the scientifically based research models that will be used with Title III funds. In addition, their detailed budget will identify the funds that will be used to support the scientifically based research models.

There are no state laws that mandate any particular models that schools must follow in serving the ELL student population.

b. Describe how the SEA will hold LEAs accountable for meeting all annual measurable achievement objectives for limited English proficient children, and making adequate yearly progress that raises the achievement of limited English proficient children.

The achievement objectives for limited English proficient children will be based on the state's English language arts objectives. Once established, districts receiving funds under Title III will report the following data to the SEA:

- The total number of ELL students in the district.
 - The number of ELL students meeting state language arts standards.
 - The number and percent of children attaining English proficiency by the end of each school year, as determined by language proficiency assessment.
 - The number of ELL children who have transitioned out of programs designed to meet their language needs.
 - The number of ELL children meeting expected gains on English proficiency tests, as established by the test publisher(s).
- c. Specify the percentage of the State's allotment that the State will reserve and the percentage of the reserved funds that the State will use for each of the following categories of State-level activities: professional development; planning, evaluation, administration, and interagency coordination; technical assistance; and providing recognition to subgrantees that have exceeded their annual measurable achievement objectives. A total amount not to exceed 5 percent of the State's allotment may be reserved by the State under section 3111(b)(2) to carry out one or more of these categories of State-level activities.**

The Nebraska Department of Education will reserve \$175,000 for SEA activities under the following categories:

- Professional Development – 10%
- Planning – 5%

Evaluation – 5%
Administration – 70%
Interagency coordination – 0%
Technical Assistance – 10%
Recognition to subgrantees – 0%

- d. Specify the percentage of the State's allotment that the State will reserve for subgrants to eligible entities that have experienced a significant increase in the percentage or number of immigrant children and youth. A total amount not to exceed 15 percent of the State's allotment must be reserved by the State under section 3114(d)(1) to award this type of subgrant.**

The Nebraska Department of Education will reserve 15% of the state Title III grant for immigrant children.

- e. Describe the process that the State will use in making subgrants under section 3114(d) to LEAs that have experienced a significant increase in the percentage or number of immigrant children and youth.**

Using data from the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years, the SEA determined the average number of immigrant children in each district. The districts also submitted data on the number of immigrant children for the 2001-02 school year. The percent of growth of immigrant children was then determined by using the average of the first two years and then calculating the percentage growth to the current school year.

Nebraska determined that a 5% growth in the number of immigrant students was a "significant increase." In addition, school districts must also have a minimum \$5,000 grant or form a consortium with other school districts in order to be eligible for funds under this subgrant. The SEA has equally considered eligible entities that have limited or no experience in serving children and youth since all schools have the opportunity to apply for funds either as individual school districts or as consortium grantees.

- f. Specify the number of limited English proficient children in the State. (See definitions of "child" in section 3301(1), and "limited English proficient" in section 9101(25).)**

In a survey conducted by the Nebraska Department of Education, school districts identified **12,451** ELL students enrolled during the 2001-2002 school year.

- g. Provide the most recent data available on the number of immigrant children and youth in the State. (See definition of "immigrant children and youth" in section 3301(6).)**

(Note: Section 3111 of the ESEA requires that State allocations for the Language Acquisition State grants be calculated on the basis of the number of limited English proficient children in the State compared to the number of such children in all States (80 percent) and the number of immigrant children and youth in the State compared to the number of such children and youth in all States (20 percent). The Department plans to use data from the 2000 Census to calculate State shares of limited English proficient students. However, these data on limited English proficient students will not be available for all States until September 2002. To ensure that States have access to funds as soon as they are available, the Department

proposes, for FY 2002 only, to provide an initial distribution of 50 percent of the funds under the limited English proficient portion of the formula based on State-reported data. As soon as Census data become available, the Department will recalculate and make final State allocations using 2000 Census data. For the 20 percent of formula funds distributed to States based on State shares of immigrant children and youth, the Department will use the most recent State-reported data year in allocating these funds. Census does not collect data that can be used to calculate State allocations for this part of the formula.)

In March of 2002, the SEA surveyed Nebraska schools to determine the number of immigrant children and youth. There were **6,249** immigrant children enrolled as reported on the SEA survey returns.

9. Title IV, Part A -- Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities

a. Describe the key strategies in the State's comprehensive plan for the use of funds by the SEA and the Governor to provide safe, orderly, and drug-free schools and communities through programs and activities that –

i. Complement and support activities of LEAs under section 4115(b) of the ESEA;

The State's plan to monitor the implementation and provide technical assistance to local educational agencies regarding local drug and violence prevention programs includes:

- a) The current monitoring document will be revised prior to July 1, 2003 to reflect the new NCLB requirements.
- b) Grantees will be required to submit a multi-year plan and yearly plan outlining local goals, objectives and activities. Plans will be reviewed and approved prior to expenditure. Budget reports will be required on a yearly basis.
- c) Internal reviews will be systematically held for each grantee to compare the approved plan and budget to the expenditures noted in the final financial report. As a result of either the internal or systems reviews suggest compliance concerns, follow-up phone or site contacts with the district will be conducted.
- d) NDE staff will make periodic phone calls to grantees for program monitoring. Staff will be available for site and phone technical assistance as well.

Technical assistance will be provided through:

- a) Ongoing contact with school/consortia representatives through phone calls and site-visits.
- b) Analyzing successful new practices in the prevention education field and disseminating those practices statewide.
- c) Incorporating promising practices into the statewide annual conference.
- d) Scheduling regional technical assistance meetings held for existing school-community teams including safe, disciplined and drug-free school strategies.

ii. Comply with the principles of effectiveness under section 4115(a); and

The state will utilize several needs assessments in determining effectiveness for this grant cycle. Information will be used from:

- 1) The Department of Health and Human Services compilation of a variety of county, regional and statewide data sets including the biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the Youth Tobacco Survey, which reflect the incidence and prevalence of alcohol and drug use within the state. Many of the data elements reflect the risk factors young people experience within their communities.
- 2) Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (Crime Commission). The Crime Commission report provides comprehensive community locale specific data on juvenile arrest records and prevalence of youth violence in Nebraska.
- 3) Nebraska SICA (State Incentive Cooperative Agreement), administered by Health and Human Services) activity - Under the guidance of the Nebraska Partners in Prevention, the state agencies will develop materials and conduct additional data gathering, including use of the *Communities That Care* survey, beginning in 2002-03 to address the additional requirements outlined with the implementation of the SICA. This is a specific partnership linkage with the SEA and Governor's representatives for the SDFSCA funds.
- 4) SDFSCA reports – Data is received from written and phone surveys conducted with schools and Consortia representatives administering SDFSCA. Technical assistance and training needs will be identified in violence prevention as well as substance use prevention/education.

iii. Otherwise are in accordance with the purpose of Title IV, Part A. (Note: The reauthorized provisions of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) Program clearly emphasize well-coordinated SEA and Governors Program activities. The statute requires that significant parts of the program application be developed for each State's program, not for the SEA and Governors Programs individually. For this reason, each State must submit a single application for SDFSC SEA and Governors Program funds. States may choose to apply for SDFSC funding through this consolidated application or through a program-specific application.)

Collaborative efforts have been established and will continue to include program activity with the Director for the Governor's portion of Safe and Drug-Free School and Communities funding, located in the Behavioral Health Division of the Department of Health and Human Services. She is also the Director for the CSAP State Incentive Grant (SICA) grant as well as the Single State Agency representative for substance abuse prevention. Five-year mutual prevention objectives for Nebraska, are being developed in coordination with implementation of the newly awarded SICA.

NDE staff work with Department of Health staff who administer the federal Center for Disease Control grant for tobacco prevention. Joint efforts have resulted in tobacco prevention material packets and prevention education for local school districts. NDE and

Department of Health are planning new informational packets for local education agencies to include information on the Pro-Children's Act.

Additional prevention/intervention collaboration input is offered by the Nebraska Prevention Resource System (NPRS). Membership includes representatives from multiple state agencies with a focus on substance abuse prevention. The mission statement for the NPRS is: To better support communities to successfully implement integrated environmental and individual prevention strategies to reduce the number of youth involved with alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and violence.

b. Describe the State's performance measures for drug and violence prevention programs and activities to be funded under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1. These performance measures must focus on student behaviors and attitudes. They must consist of performance indicators for drug and violence prevention programs and activities and levels of performance for each performance indicator. The description must also include timelines for achieving the performance goals stated, details about what mechanism the State will use to collect data concerning the indicators, and provide baseline data for indicators (if available).

The state goals are to:

1. Develop safe and disciplined school/community strategies
 - a) Analyze current practice and promising local initiatives, and
 - b) Through analysis of promising practices, develop the components of a safe and drug-free school plan.
2. To support a drug and alcohol prevention initiative for the Nebraska four reservation schools, serving primarily Native American youth.
3. Provide training for implementation of safe and drug-free schools
4. Provide training in the Student Assistance Program (SAP) model of identification, referral and support for students exhibiting high risk behaviors (including violence).
5. Provide technical assistance to Consortia and local school districts participating in the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program. The goal is to enhance capacity to plan, implement, conduct and implement comprehensive programs.
6. Provide training and technical assistance in 2002 to LEAs/Consortia/Prevention Centers on:
 - a. Implementing the new Principles of Effectiveness as outlined in NCLB
 - b. Planning and Conducting a Data Driven Needs Assessment Process.
7. Developing a strength based approach for prevention program implementation.
Additional training and technical assistance will be planned and implemented yearly, based on information received from the needs assessment processes. Parental involvement will be solicited in each of these activities.

8. Support and promote development of comprehensive prevention programs by districts/consortia participating in Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA).

Measurement of these goals 1-8 will be by records of materials developed, workshops/conferences/regional meetings held, lists of persons attending, and specific program evaluations completed.

Public reporting will be through newsletters, regular mailings to districts/consortia participating in the SDFSCA program, regional meetings for LEAs, consortia, a proposed yearly state conference on promising practices, reports of the Interagency Drug Coordination Team and Nebraska State Board of Education.

Specific performance measures related to changes in attitudes, beliefs and/or behaviors will be developed before May of 2003. They will indicate measurable objects and goals as well as levels of achievement. The Governor's allocation representative and the SEA representative are meeting regularly to formulate a plan for measurement that reflect shared goals and incorporate the SDFSCA objectives with the SICA objectives so that evaluation results can be mutually inclusive.

c. Describe the steps the State will use to implement the Uniform Management Information and Reporting System (UMIRS) required by section 4112(c)(3). The description should include information about which agency(ies) will be responsible for implementing the UMIRS, a tentative schedule for implementing the UMIRS requirements, as well as preliminary plans for collecting required information.

- i. (truancy rates) and
- ii (frequency, seriousness and incidence resulting in suspensions and expulsions). To address these building by building reporting requirements, it is planned that the SDFSCA staff will work with the data management team at the Department of Education to modify the current suspension/expulsion reports. A draft of those modifications will be reviewed by LEA representatives and parents prior to implementation in the spring of 2003.
- iii. (types of curricula, programs and services provided....) The SDFSCA program representative will convene a group of LEA/Consortia grant representatives, Regional Prevention Providers and parents to develop an annual report form to collect the information required within this section.
- iv. (incidence and prevalence, age of onset....) The Department of Education is currently exploring the possibility of addressing this data requirement through a cooperative project with Health and Human Services relating to implementation of the new SICA initiative. One of four operational work groups convened by NePiP includes a Data Monitoring group charged with responsibility for the creation of common data collection and needs assessment system that will provide solid information for designing and selecting effective prevention strategies at the State and local levels. The meetings to look at a statewide data collection system to address local, regional and statewide prevention data needs will begin in June 2002. The timeline will be for a decision to be made by December 2002, with implementation to begin in the summer of 2003.

10. Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1, section 4112(a) -- Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities: Reservation of State Funds for the Governor

- a. **The Governor may reserve up to 20 percent of the State's allocation under this program to award competitive grants or contracts. Indicate the percentage of the State's allocation that is to be reserved for the Governor's program.**
- b. **The Governor may administer these funds directly or designate an appropriate State agency to receive the funds and administer this allocation. Provide the name of the entity designated to receive these funds, contact information for that entity (the name of the head of the designated agency, address, telephone number) and the "DUNS" number that should be used to award these funds.**

Twenty percent (20%) of Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities funds are to be reserved for allocation to the Governor's program. The entity designated to receive these funds for the Governor's Office is the Office of Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Addiction Services (OMHSAAS); Behavioral Health Division; Nebraska Health and Human Service System. The Deputy Director for Behavioral Health is George Hanigan, P.O. Box 94728, Lincoln, NE 68509-4728, 402-479-5126. Accounting and deposit of federal funds pertaining to the Safe and Drugs Free Schools and Communities program is handled by the Nebraska Health and Human Service System's Division of Finance and Support, P.O. Box 95026, Lincoln, NE 68509-5026. The Governor's representative for the administration of Governor's portion of Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities funds is Laurie Barger Sutter, Prevention Program Manager, OMHSAAS, Nebraska Health and Human Service System, P.O. Box 94728, Lincoln, NE 68509-4728, 402-479-5573. The DUNS number for Nebraska Health and Human Service System is 197603798.

11. Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2, section 4126 -- Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities: Community Service Grants

Describe how the SEA, after it has consulted with the Governor, will use program funds to develop and implement a community service program for suspended and expelled students.

In the summer of 2002, NDE staff will convene a group of stakeholders, including representatives from the Crime Commission, LEAs and Alternative Education programs, Probation, Parole, Student Assistance Program, Community Based programs, and the Governor's office representative. The purpose will be to gather information on what is currently being done in Nebraska with Community Service for youth who have been suspended or expelled and what "promising practices" are available for implementation in the future.

An advisory group will be appointed in the fall of 2002 to develop a process for awarding contracts for direct services for LEAs. Issues to be addressed include the criteria for contracting and the requirement to promote improved academic achievement. The NDE assures that the state will meet the regulatory requirements for this new program but the state has yet to receive guidance on what those requirements will be.

Three priorities for students who have been suspended or expelled have been identified in preliminary discussions with stakeholders:

- a. promoting the effectiveness of community service programs for those who are already serving suspended or expelled students,

- b. providing information to LEAs and Community programs about community service options, and
- c. providing staff development on school reintegration approaches for these youth.

It is anticipated that by January 2003 contracts will be ready for applicants. Following review and approval, implementation should begin in the spring of 2003.

12. Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Identify the percentage of students participating in 21st Century Community Learning Centers who meet or exceed the proficient level of performance on State assessments in reading and mathematics. The State must collect baseline data for the 2002-2003 school year, and submit all of these data to the Department no later than early September of 2003 by a date the Department will announce.

The State will collect baseline data from funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers in the Spring of 2003.

13. Title V, Part A -- Innovative Programs

- a. **In accordance with section 5112(a)(1) of the ESEA, provide the SEA's formula for distributing program funds to LEAs. Include information on how the SEA will adjust its formula to provide higher per-pupil allocations to LEAs that have the greatest numbers or percentages of children whose education imposes a higher-than-average cost per child, such as –**
 - i. **Children living in areas with concentrations of economically disadvantaged families;**
 - ii. **Children from economically disadvantaged families; and**
 - iii. **Children living in sparsely populated areas.**
 - iv. **Identify the amount or percentage the State will reserve for each State-level activity under section 5121, and describe the activity.**

Eighty-five percent of the money available to Nebraska, after deducting administrative costs for the private school bypass contract, will be distributed to local educational agencies. Of that amount, fifteen percent will provide higher per-pupil allocations to local educational agencies that have the greatest percentages of children from economically disadvantaged families. Consistent with the practice used in the ESEA Title VI program, the number of students qualifying for the free lunch/special milk reimbursement rates in the National School Lunch Program will be used to distribute funds for this formula component.

The process for identifying school districts eligible for the high cost formula funds includes several steps. Each year, the number of children participating in the School Lunch Program who qualified for the free meal reimbursement rate is established for each school district. Reimbursement claims for the month of October, as revised through the December claim adjustment process are used for the data. That information is taken from the claim reports that occur in the year preceding the initial project year; i.e. October 2001 for 2002-03 project period. By comparing the number of students meeting the free meal criteria to the enrolled membership count for each district, a rank order is created. Those school districts that ranked in the upper 35 percent of all schools in that process are eligible to receive a prorated portion of funds assigned to this formula category. Student free lunch/special milk population counts

for a district, as compared to the total counts for all schools qualifying for the high cost element in the formula, serve as the basis for prorating the additional funds.

The balance of the money, or eighty-five percent of the funds, will be distributed on the basis of student membership data. The Fall Membership Report for the year preceding the initial project year supplies this data; i.e. 2001 Fall Membership Report for the 2002-03 grant cycle. Each school district in the state will receive a prorated share of the money available in this formula component based upon its student membership count.

State Level Activities

Nebraska is scheduled to receive \$2,301,527 from the FY 2002 appropriation for the Title V program. Based on contract rates previously set by the U. S. Department of Education in consultation with the Nebraska Agent for Non-Public Schools, administrative costs for the bypass will be \$85,260. After deducting that amount from the state grant, local educational agencies would be eligible to receive \$1,883,827 or 85% of the available funds. The Nebraska Department of Education will be able to use an estimated amount of \$332,440 for state-level activities. These funds will be expended for the following activities:

- 1) Grant Administrative Services - \$49,866. Activities supported by the money include such things as establishing grant allotments for school districts, providing technical assistance to grant applicants, processing project reimbursement claims, completing fiscal and evaluation reports, etc.
- 2) Commissioner's Discretionary Fund - \$25,000. The money supports special projects that are aligned to the purposes of the program. It is anticipated that the funds would support such activities as teacher-training programs related to the Lewis & Clark Expedition, the Nebraska Teacher of the Year Program, etc.
- 3) School Safety - \$115,000. These funds support the agency's ability to provide technical assistance to educators on such matters as maintaining a safe physical environment, preventing bullying practices, safety planning, school security, nonviolent crisis intervention, hazardous materials awareness, crisis team training, hazard recognition, etc.
- 4) Services for Native American Students - \$142,574. The funds allow communities serving significant numbers of Native American students to continue school improvement planning processes, assist in coordinating curricular offerings in schools with high mobility rates, preparing students to meet state academic standards, etc.

14. Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6111 – State Assessments Formula Grants

Describe how the State plans to use formula funds awarded under section 6113(b)(1) for the development and implementation of State assessments in accordance with section 6111(1) and (2).

See response under Part I. Question 1 (h).

15. Title VI, Part B, Subpart 2 -- Rural and Low-Income School Program

Identify the SEA's specific measurable goals and objectives related to increasing student academic achievement; decreasing student dropout rates; or improvement in

other educational factors the SEA may elect to measure, and describe how Rural and Low-Income School program funds will help the SEA meet the goals and objectives identified.

All districts receiving grants under the Rural Education Achievement Program will include a description of plans to meet the State and ESEA goals in the Comprehensive State Plan for School Improvement for increasing student academic achievement in their District Comprehensive Plans for School Improvement.

a. Describe how the State elects to make awards under the Rural and Low-Income School Program:

- i. By formula proportionate to the numbers of students in eligible districts;**
- ii. Competitively (please explain any priorities for the competition); or**
- iii. By a State-designed formula that results in equal or greater assistance being awarded to school districts that serve higher concentrations of poor students.**

(NOTE: If a State elects this option, the formula must be submitted for the Department's approval. States that elect this option may submit their State-designed formulas for approval as part of this submission.)

The majority of Nebraska's small school districts are eligible for the Small, Rural grants available under REAP. Only eleven districts in the State qualify for grants under Rural and Low-Income. The preliminary figures for Rural and Low-Income School Program indicate Nebraska will receive \$8,160 for this program. Unless the amount of funds increases when final figures are known, the Rural and Low-Income funds will go to the eligible district with the highest number of students and the greatest concentration of low-income students. As stated above, the districts will include a description of their plans to meet State and ESEA goals in the District Comprehensive Plans for School Improvement.

GEPA Section 427

Steps taken to ensure that all programs and services funded through No Child Left Behind comply with the requirements of Section 427 of GEPA:

1) TransACT Translation Library

The Nebraska Department of Education has purchased a statewide license to the TransACT Translation Library. Funding for this license has been made available from Title I, Early Childhood Office, Special Education, Title VI, the Multicultural/Urban Education Project, and the Title VII Bilingual Education project.

The Translation Library contains over 60 documents that have been translated into 22 languages enabling effective communication with families of students who are English language learners. The documents include forms and documents that cover a wide range of topics such as attendance, parent communication, school lunch program, health, medical, and immunization. In addition, state-specific documents, such as the "Parental Rights in Special Education" have been translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Nuer. These documents are also posted on the TransACT Translation Library web

site and are available to Nebraska schools. The statewide license provides unlimited access by every school district in the state.

- 2) All meetings and workshops will be conducted in handicapped accessible locations with notice of available assistance provided on all registration forms. Notices of meetings and workshops will be translated, if appropriate, into the major languages of the parents of ELL children.
- 3) Translators for hearing impaired will be provided, as needed.
- 4) Translation options are used at the annual Parent Involvement Conference.

Each district's Comprehensive Plan for School Improvement will include the steps the district will take to ensure all programs and services that are federally funded meet Section 427 of GEPA requirements.

Consolidated Administrative Funds

a. Plans for consolidation

The Department of Education will consolidate administrative funds from all programs included in this application. The administrative funds from the Homeless Education program will be included. Until guidance from the U. S. Department of Education is available regarding the inclusion of administrative funds from Reading First, that program will not be included in the consolidation of administrative funds.

The expenditures of the Department for total operations for Education from 07/01/00 to 06/30/01 were used to determine if federal funds constitute less than 50% of the State agency support. The federal expenditures were \$8,623,440 out of a total of \$26,190,232 or 32.9%.

b. Any additional uses of funds

In addition to the costs for administration of each of the NCLB programs, the consolidated administrative funds will provide support for:

- Information and technical assistance to districts and ESUs for all federal programs. This includes a webcast (that will also be broadcast on satellite TV) of the new requirements and components of NCLB, joint conferences and meetings, support for a federal programs homepage to provide timely information and other activities.
- The creation and support for advisory groups and task forces on areas/topics that need to be developed in order to implement the new requirements of NCLB.
- Costs associated with consolidation of plans and applications for programs under NCLB.
- To support development of a definition and policy for persistently dangerous schools.
- To support development of the Rule and regulations/guidance for paraprofessionals.

Transferability of SEA funds

For the 2002-03 school year, the Department will be developing plans for using the flexibility allowed under transferability. At the time this plan is being written, several options are being considered:

- In conjunction with the Reading First funds for professional development in the area of Reading, to provide a Reading Specialist expertise as part of the Statewide Support Teams in the regional service units (ESUs),
- In collaboration with institutions of higher education and other organizations, to support leadership academies for the professional development of school administrators; and
- To support the State's efforts in meeting the goal to ensure that all staff (teachers and paraprofessionals) are highly qualified.

The State will apply to the U. S. Department of Education for approval to transfer funds when these decisions have been determined.

Part IV. Assurances

General and Cross-Cutting Assurances

Description: Section 9304(a) requires States to have on file with the Secretary a single set of assurances, applicable to each program included in the consolidated application, that provide that --

1. Each such program will be administered in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications;
2. The control of funds provided under each such program and title to property acquired with program funds will be in a public agency, a nonprofit private agency, institution, or organization, or an Indian tribe, if the law authorizing the program provides for assistance to those entities; and
3. The public agency, nonprofit private agency, institution, or organization, or Indian tribe will administer those funds and property to the extent required by the authorizing law;
4. The State will adopt and use proper methods of administering each such program, including—
 - a. The enforcement of any obligations imposed by law on agencies, institutions, organizations, and other recipients responsible for carrying out each program;
 - b. The correction of deficiencies in program operations that are identified through audits, monitoring, or evaluation; and
 - c. The adoption of written procedures for the receipt and resolution of complaints alleging violations of law in the administration of the programs;
5. The State will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation of each such program conducted by or for the Secretary or other Federal officials;
6. The State will use such fiscal control and fund accounting procedures as will ensure proper disbursement of, and accounting for, Federal funds paid to the State under each such program;
7. The State will—
 - a. Make reports to the Secretary as may be necessary to enable the Secretary to perform the Secretary's duties under each such program; and
 - b. Maintain such records, provide such information to the Secretary, and afford such access to the records as the Secretary may find necessary to carry out the Secretary's duties; and
 - c. Before the plan or application was submitted to the Secretary, the State afforded a reasonable opportunity for public comment on the plan or application and considered such comment.

Certification

Certification of Compliance with Unsafe School Choice Option Requirements

The State certifies that it has established and implemented a statewide policy requiring that students attending persistently dangerous public elementary or secondary schools, as determined by the State (in consultation with a representative sample of local educational agencies), or who become victims of violent criminal offenses, as determined by State law, while in or on the grounds of public elementary and secondary schools that the students attend, be allowed to attend safe public elementary or secondary schools within the local educational agency, including a public charter school.

ESEA Program Specific Assurances

Each SEA that submits a consolidated application also must provide an assurance that it will comply with all requirements of the ESEA programs included in their consolidated applications, whether or not the program statute identifies these requirements as a description or assurance that States would address, absent this consolidated application, in a program-specific plan or application. States are required to maintain records of their compliance with each of those requirements. (Note: For the Safe and Drug Free Schools programs, the SEA must have all appropriate assurances from the Governor on record.)

Through the general assurance and assurance (1) in section 9304 (a), the SEA agrees to comply with all requirements of the ESEA and other applicable program statutes. While all requirements are important, we have identified below a number of key requirements of each program that the SEA is agreeing to meet through this general assurance. This list of program-specific requirements the SEA is assuring is not exhaustive; States are accountable for all program requirements.

1. Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs Operated By LEAs

Assurance that –

- a. The State plan for the implementation of Title I, Part A was developed in consultation with LEAs, teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, administrators, other staff and parents and that the plan for Title I, Part A coordinates with other programs under this Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, the Head Start Act, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- b. The SEA has a plan for assisting LEAs and schools to develop capacity to comply with program operation and for providing additional educational assistance to students needing help to achieve State standards, including:
 - i. the use of schoolwide programs;
 - ii. steps to ensure that both schoolwide program- and targeted assisted program schools have highly qualified staff (section 1111);
 - iii. ensuring that assessments results are used by LEAs, schools, and teachers to improve achievement (section 1111);
 - iv. use of curricula aligned with state standards (section 1111);
 - v. provision of supplemental services, including a list of approved service providers and standards and techniques for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of services (section 1116);
 - vi. choice and options (section 1116);
 - vii. the state support system under section 1117; and
 - viii. teacher and paraprofessional qualifications (section 1119).
- c. The State has a strategy for ensuring that children served by Title I, Part A will be taught the same knowledge and skills in other subjects and held to the same expectations as all children.
- d. The State will implement the accountability requirements of section 1116(f) regarding schools identified for improvement prior to the passage of NCLB.
- e. The State will implement the provisions of section 1116 regarding LEAs and schools in improvement and corrective action.
- f. The State will produce and disseminate an annual State Report Card in accordance with section 1111(h)(1) and will ensure that LEAs that receive Title I, Part A funds produce and disseminate annual local Report Cards in accordance with section 1111(h)(2).

- g. The SEA will ensure that LEAs will annually assess English skills for all limited-English proficient students.
- h. The SEA will coordinate with other agencies that provide services to children, youth and families to address factors that have significantly affected the achievement of students.
- i. The SEA will ensure that assessment results are promptly provided to LEAs, schools, and teachers.
- j. The State will participate in State academic assessments of 4th and 8th grade reading and mathematics under NAEP if the Secretary pays the cost of administering such assessments, and will ensure that schools drawn for the NAEP sample will participate in all phases of these assessments, including having results published.
- k. The SEA, in consultation with the Governor, will produce a plan for carrying out the responsibilities of the State under sections 1116 and 1117, and the SEA's statewide system for technical assistance and support of LEAs.
- l. The SEA will assist LEAs in developing or identifying high-quality curricula aligned with State academic achievement standards and will disseminate such curricula to each LEA and local school within the State.
- m. The State will carry out the assurances specified in section 1111(c).

Title I, Part B – Even Start Family Literacy

Assurance that –

- a. The SEA will meet its indicators of program quality developed in section 1240.
- b. The SEA will help each project under this part to fully implement the program elements described in section 1235, including the monitoring of the projects' compliance with staff qualification requirements and usage of instructional programs based on scientifically based reading research for children and adults.
- c. The SEA collaborated with early childhood specialists, adult education specialists, and others at the State and local level with interests in family literacy in the development and implementation of this plan.

Title I, Part C – Education of Migrant Children

Assurance that –

In addition to meeting the seven program assurances in Section 1304(c), the SEA will ensure that –

- a. Special educational needs of migratory children, including preschool migratory children, are identified and addressed through – (a) the full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, State, and Federal educational programs; (b) joint planning among local, State, and Federal educational programs serving migrant children, including language instruction educational programs under part A or B of title III; and (c) the integration of services available under this part with services provided by those other programs, a (d) measurable program goals and outcomes.
- b. State and its local operating agencies will identify and address the special educational needs of migratory children in accordance with a comprehensive State plan as specified in section 1306 (a).
- c. State will provide for educational continuity through the timely transfer of pertinent school records in a manner consistent with procedures the Secretary may require.

Title I, Part D – Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent or At-Risk

Assurance that the SEA –

- a. Will ensure that programs will be carried out in accordance with the State plan.
- b. Will carry out the evaluation requirements of section 1431.
- c. Has collaborated with parents, correctional facilities, local education agencies, public and private business and other state and federal technical and vocational programs in developing and implementing its plan to meet the educational needs of neglected, delinquent, and at-risk children and youth.
- d. Conducts a process to award Subpart 2 subgrants, to programs operated by local education agencies and correctional facilities.
- e. Will integrate programs and services for neglected, delinquent, and at-risk children and youth with other programs under this Act or other Acts.

Title I, Part F – Comprehensive School Reform

Assurance that the SEA will --

- a. Fulfill all requirements relating to the competitive subgranting of program funds.
- b. Awards subgrants of not less than \$50,000 and of sufficient size and scope to support the initial costs of the program.
- c. Award subgrants renewable for 2 additional one year periods if the school is making substantial progress.
- d. Consider the equitable distribution of subgrants to different geographic regions in the State, including urban and rural areas and to schools serving elementary and secondary students.
- e. Reserve not more than five (5) percent of grant funds for administrative, evaluation, and technical assistance expenses.
- f. Use funds to supplement, and not supplant, any other funds that would otherwise be available to carry out these activities.
- g. Report subgrant information, including names of LEAs and schools, amount of award, and description of award.
- h. Provide a copy of the State's annual program evaluation.

Title II, Part A – Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund

Assurance that --

- a. The SEA will take steps to ensure compliance with the requirements for “professional development” as the term is defined in section 9101(34).
- b. All funded activities will be developed collaboratively and based on the input of teachers, principals, administrators, paraprofessionals, and other school personnel.
- c. The SEA will implement the provisions for technical assistance and accountability in section 2141 with regard to any LEA that has failed to make adequate yearly progress for two or more consecutive years.

Title II, Part D – Enhanced Education Through Technology

Assurance that the SEA --

- a. Will ensure that each subgrant awarded under section 2412 (a)(2)(B) is of sufficient size and duration, and that the program funded by the subgrant is of sufficient scope and quality, to carry out the purposes of this part effectively.
- b. Has in place a State Plan for Educational Technology that meets all of the provisions of section 2413 of ESEA.

Title III, Part A – English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement

Assurance that --

- a. Subgrantees will be required to use their subgrants to build their capacity to continue to provide high-quality language instruction educational programs for ELL students once the subgrants are no longer available.
- b. The State will consult with LEAs, education-related community groups and non-profit organizations, parents, teachers, school administrators, and researchers in developing annual measurable student achievement objectives for subgrantees.
- c. Each subgrantee will include in its plan a certification that all teachers in a Title III language instruction educational program for limited English proficient children are fluent in English and any other language used for instruction.
- d. In awarding subgrants to eligible entities that have experienced a recent significant increase in the percentage or number of immigrant students, the State will equally consider eligible entities that have limited or no experience in serving immigrant children and youth, and consider the quality of each local plan.
- e. Subgrants will be of sufficient size and scope to support high-quality programs.
- f. Subgrantees will be required to provide for an annual reading or language arts assessment in English of all children who have been in the United States for three or more consecutive years.
- g. Subgrantees will be required to assess annually the English proficiency of all ELL children.
- h. A subgrantee plan will not be in violation of any State law, including State constitutional law, regarding the education of ELL children.
- i. Subgrantee evaluations will be used to determine and improve the effectiveness of subgrantee programs and activities.
- j. Subgrantee evaluations will include a description of the progress made by children in meeting State academic content and student academic achievement standards for each of the two years after these children no longer participate in a Title III language instruction educational program.
- k. A subgrantee that fails to make progress toward meeting annual measurable achievement objectives for two consecutive years will be required to develop an improvement plan that will ensure the subgrantee meets those objectives.
- l. Subgrantees will be required to provide the following information to parents of ELL children selected for participation in a language instruction educational program:
 - 1) How the program will meet the educational needs of their children;
 - 2) Their options to decline to enroll their children in that program or to choose another program, if available;
 - 3) If applicable, the failure of the subgrantee to make progress on the annual measurable achievement objectives for their children.
- m. In awarding subgrants, the State will address the needs of school systems of all sizes and in all geographic areas within the State, including school systems with urban and rural schools.

Title IV, Part A – Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities

Assurance that --

- a. The State has developed a comprehensive plan for the use of funds by the State educational agency and the chief executive officer of the State to provide safe, orderly, and drug-free schools and communities through programs and activities that complement and support activities of local educational agencies under section 4115(b), that comply with the principles of effectiveness under section 4115(a), and that otherwise are in accordance with the purpose of this part.

- b. Activities funded under this program will foster a safe and drug-free learning environment that supports academic achievement.
- c. The application was developed in consultation and coordination with appropriate State officials and others, including the chief executive officer, the chief State school officer, the head of the State alcohol and drug abuse agency, the heads of the State health and mental health agencies, the head of the State child welfare agency, the head of the State board of education, or their designees, and representatives of parents, students, and community-based organizations.
- d. Funds reserved under section 4112(a) will not duplicate the efforts of the State education agency and local educational agencies with regard to the provisions of school-based drug and violence prevention activities and that those funds will be used to serve populations not normally served by the State educational agencies and local educational agencies and populations that need special services, such as school dropouts, suspended and expelled students, youth in detention centers, runaway or homeless children and youth, and pregnant and parenting youth.
- e. The State will cooperate with, and assist, the Secretary in conducting data collection as required by section 4122.
- f. LEAs in the State will comply with the provisions of section 9501 pertaining to the participation of private school children and teachers in the programs and activities under this program.
- g. Funds under this program will be used to increase the level of State, local, and other non-Federal funds that would, in the absence of funds under this subpart, be made available for programs and activities authorized under this program, and in no case supplant such State, local, and other non-Federal funds.
- h. A needs assessment was conducted by the State for drug and violence prevention programs, which shall be based on ongoing State evaluation activities, including data on the incidence and prevalence of illegal drug use and violence among youth in schools and communities, including the age of onset, the perception of health risks, and the perception of social disapproval among such youth, the prevalence of protective factors, buffers, or assets and other variables in the school and community identified through scientifically based research.
- i. The State will develop and implement procedures for assessing and publicly reporting progress toward meeting the performance measures.
- j. The State application will be available for public review after submission of the application.
- k. Special outreach activities will be carried out by the SEA and the chief executive officer of the State to maximize the participation of community-based organizations of demonstrated effectiveness that provide services such as mentoring programs in low-income communities.
- l. Funds will be used by the SEA and the chief executive officer of the State to support, develop, and implement community-wide comprehensive drug and violence prevention planning and organizing activities.
- m. The State will develop a process for review of applications from local educational agencies that includes receiving input from parents.

Title IV, Part B – 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Assure that the SEA will –

- a. Write the State application in consultation and coordination with appropriate State officials, including the chief State school officer, and other State agencies administering before and after school programs, the heads of the State health and

- mental health agencies or their designees, and representatives of teachers, parents, students, the business community, and community-based organizations.
- b. Award subgrants of not less than three years and not more than five years that are of not less than \$50,000 and of sufficient size and scope to support high quality, effective programs.
- c. Fund entities that propose to serve students who primarily attend schools eligible for schoolwide programs under section 1114 or schools that serve a high percentage of students from low-income families, and the families of such students.
- d. Require local applicants to submit a plan describing how community learning centers to be funded through this grant will continue after the grant period.
- e. Require local applicants to describe in their applications how the transportation needs of participating students will be addressed.

Title V, Part A – Innovative Programs

Assure that --

- a. The State has set forth the allocation of funds required to implement section 5142 (participation of children enrolled in private schools).
- b. The State has made provision for timely public notice and public dissemination of the information concerning allocations of funds required to implement provisions for assistance to students attending private schools.
- c. Apart from providing technical and advisory assistance and monitoring compliance with this part, the SEA has not exercised, and will not exercise, any influence in the decision making processes of LEAs as to the expenditure made pursuant to the LEAs' application for program funds submitted under section 5133.

Signature Pages

**THE STATE OF NEBRASKA HEREBY REQUESTS FUNDS AS AUTHORIZED
BY SECTION 9302 OF THE ESEA FOR THE PROGRAMS SELECTED AND IDENTIFIED
ON THE "LIST OF PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION."**

1. Legal name of Applicant Agency (State Educational Agency):	2. D.U.N.S. number: Taxpayer ID Number (TIN):
3. Address (include zip):	4. Contact Person for Consolidated Application Name: Dr. Marilyn Peterson Position: Federal Programs Director TeELlhone: (402) 471-3504 Fax: (402) 471-0117 E-Mail: mpeterso@nde.state.ne.us
5. Is the applicant delinquent on any Federal debt? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, explanation attached.	
6. By signing this consolidated State application, the State certifies the following: a. The following assurances and certifications covering the programs included in this Consolidated State Application have been filed with the U.S. Department of Education (either as a part of this Application or through another submission from the State): i. <u>Section 14303 and EDGAR</u> . The assurances in Section 9304 (a) of the ESEA, and Section 76.104 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) ii. <u>ESEA Program Assurances</u> . Any assurances or certifications included in the statutes governing any program included in this Application. iii. <u>Assurances and Certifications</u> . Any assurances or certifications included in the Application under "Assurances and Certifications." iv. <u>Crosscutting</u> . As applicable, the assurances in OMB Standard Form 424B (Government-wide Assurances for Non-Construction Programs). v. <u>Lobbying; debarment/suspension; drug-free workplace</u> . The three certifications in ED Form 80-0013 and 80-0014, relating to lobbying, debarment/suspension, and drug-free workplace. (For more information, see 61 <i>Fed. Reg.</i> 1412 (01.19.96).) b. As of the date of submission of this Application, none of the facts have changed upon which those certifications and assurances were made.	
7. To the best of my knowledge and belief, all data are true and correct. The governing body of the applicant has duly authorized the document and the applicant will comply with the assurances and certifications provided in this package if the assistance is awarded.	
a. Printed Name and Title of Authorized State/SEA Representative:	b. TeELlhone: Fax: E-Mail:
c. Signature of Authorized State/SEA Representative:	d. Date:

**SAFE DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT STATE GRANTS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER COVER SHEET**

1. Legal Name of Applicant Agency (Chief Executive Office):	2. DUNS Number:
3. Address (including zip code):	4. Contact Person Name: Position: TeELlhone: Fax: E-Mail Address:
5. Reservation of Funds: ____% Indicate the amount the Governor wishes to reserve (up to 20%) of the total State SDFSCA State Grant allocation.	
6. By signing this form the Governor certifies the following: a. The following assurances and certifications covering the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act State Grants program have been filed with the U.S. Department of Education (either as a part of this Application or through another submission from the State): i. <u>Section 14303 and EDGAR</u> . The assurances in Section 9304(a) of the ESEA, and Section 76.104 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). ii. <u>ESEA Program Assurances</u> . Any assurances or certifications included in the statutes governing the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act State Grants program. iii. <u>Assurances and Certification</u> . Any assurances or certifications included in the Application under "Assurances and Certifications." iv. <u>Cross-Cutting</u> . As applicable, the assurances in OMB Standard Form 424B (Government-wide Assurances for Non-Construction Programs.)v. <u>Lobbying; debarment/suspension; drug-free workplace</u> . The three certification in ED Form 80-0013 and 80-0014, relating to lobbying, debarment/suspension, and drug-free workplace. (For more information, see 61 <i>Fed. Reg.</i> 1412 (01.19.96.) b. As of the date of submission of this Application, none of the facts has changed upon which those certifications and assurances were made.	
7. To the best of my knowledge and belief, all data are true and correct. The governing body of the applicant has duly authorized the document and the applicant will comply with the assurances and certification provided in this package if the assistance is awarded.	
8. Typed name of Chief Executive Officer	9. TeELlhone Number:
10. Signature of Chief Executive Officer	11. Date

ESEA PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN
THE CONSOLIDATED STATE APPLICATION

Checklist

The State of Nebraska requests funds for the programs indicated below:

- ☒ Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
- ☒ Title I, Part B, Subpart 3: Even Start Family Literacy
- ☒ Title I, Part C: Education of Migrant Children
- ☒ Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
- ☒ Title I, Part F: Comprehensive School Reform
- ☒ Title II, Part A: Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund
- ☒ Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education Through Technology
- ☒ Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
- ☒ Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1: Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities
- ☒ Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2: Community Service Grants
- ☒ Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- ☒ Title V, Part A: Innovative Programs
- ☒ Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6111: State Assessment Program
- ☒ Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6112: Enhanced Assessment Instruments Competitive Grant Program
- ☒ Title VI, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income Schools

SEA Contacts

ESEA Program Title	SEA Program Contact		
	Name	Phone	E-Mail address
Title I, Part A	Marilyn Peterson	(402) 471-3504	mpeterso@nde.state.ne.us
Title I, Part B, 3	Eleanor Kirkland	(402) 471-3501	kirkland@nde.state.ne.us
Title I, Part C	Betty Alfred	(402) 471-3440	balfred@nde.state.ne.us
Title I, Part D	Marilyn Peterson	(402) 471-3504	mpeterso@nde.state.ne.us
Title I, Part F	Dave Ankenman	(402) 471-4342	ankenman@nde.state.ne.us
Title II, Part A	Mike Kissler	(402) 471-2741	mkissler@nde.state.ne.us
Title II, Part D	Dean Bergman	(402) 471-5023	dbergman@nde.state.ne.us
Title III, Part A	Nancy Rowch	(402) 471-2477	nrowch@nde.state.ne.us
Title IV, Part A (SEA)	Karen Stevens	(402) 471-2448	kstevens@nde.state.ne.us
Title IV, Part A (Governor)	Karen Stevens	(402) 471-2448	kstevens@nde.state.ne.us
Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2	Karen Stevens	(402) 471-2448	kstevens@nde.state.ne.us
Title IV, Part B	Joel Scherling	(402) 471-0946	jscherli@nde.state.ne.us
Title V, Part A	Mike Kissler	(402) 471-2741	mkissler@nde.state.ne.us
Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, 6111	Marilyn Peterson	(402) 471-3504	mpeterso@nde.state.ne.us
Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, 6112	Marilyn Peterson	(402) 471-3504	mpeterso@nde.state.ne.us
Title VI, Part B, Subpart 2	Marilyn Peterson	(402) 471-3504	mpeterso@nde.state.ne.us